

KRISHNAKANTA'S WILL

BY BANKIM CHANDER CHATTERJEE

[ALL RIGHTS RESERVED]

Part the First

CHAPTER I

IN the village of Haridgram there was once a big zemindar whose name was Krishnakanta Roy. He was a very rich man, the annual income of his estate being nearly two lacs of rupees. This large property was acquired both by himself and his younger brother, Ramkanta Roy. They worked and earned money together earrying on a joint household, and their affection for each other was such that the one could never dream he might be cheated by the other. The landed property was all bought in the name of Krishnakanta.

To the younger brother, Ramkanta, a son was born whose name was Govindalal. After the birth of this child he resolved, for its sake, to propose to his elder brother that the property, which was in his name alone, should henceforth stand in both names as both had equal shares in it. Though he was quite sure that his elder brother would never do wrong there was, as he thought, no knowing but that after the death of their father, his nephews might try to trick their cousin out of his legitimate share of the property. He thought of this, and though his mind was made up to speak to his brother, he waited and waited for an opportunity till one day, being on a visit in one of his estates, he fell ill and died.

Now, Krishnakanta, who had the whole property in his name, could if he had been so inclined, have deprived his late brother's son of his right, but he was not the man to do wrong. He brought up his nephew along with his own sons taking good care of him and providing for his education. And in his mind he had resolved that he would leave him by will his brother's half share of the property.

Krishnakanta had two sons, Haralal and Benodlal, the latter being the younger of the two. Besides he had one daughter, who was called Soilabati. Now, the old

man had recently made a will in which he had mentioned that after his death Govindalal should get his father's half share of the property, while each of his two sons should have three sixteenths, and his wife and daughter one sixteenth each, of his own half share. Haralal was a pert and rather refractory son of his father. When he heard how the property had been disposed of he was greatly exasperated. "What's this!" said he hurrying to his father. "Our cousin has one half of the property and you give us only three sixteenths each!"

"That's all right," said Krishnakanta. "I have given him, as his due, his father's half share."

"What right had my uncle to the property?" said Haralal. "Who is his son to have a share in it? You give me a pittance, and I am expected to support my mother and sister into the bargain. Why should they have any share at all? Would it not have been just and reasonable if you had mentioned them in the will as being only entitled to maintenance?"

His words offended his father. "My son," said he, "the property is mine, not yours and I suppose I have a right to dispose of it as I like."

"You have lost your senses," cried Haralal. "I cannot allow you to do as you like."

"Haralal," cried his father in a passion, "am I to brook this impertinence from you? If you were a boy I would send for the good pedagogue and get him to give you a canning."

"At school I remember to have sung his moustache and I will not spare the will you may be sure."

Krishnakanta uttered not a word. He tore up the will with his own hands, and in its stead had a fresh one made. In it he mentioned one half of the property as Govindalal's right and the other half he disposed of by giving five sixteenths to

Benodelal, and dividing the remaining three sixteenths equally among his wife, daughter and Haralal.

When Haralal came to know what his share was in the fresh will made by his father he left the house in a huff and went off to Calcutta. From there he wrote a letter to his father, the purport of which was as follows :—

"I purpose to marry a widow. The pundits here say that widow marriage is not forbidden by the shastras. However, I know you will be dead set against my marrying a widow. But if you will let me have one-half of the property and get the will registered at once I will give up my intention, otherwise not."

His father wrote back to say that he was an unworthy son, and that he would sorely cut him off with a shilling if he carried out the intention he had expressed in his letter.

A few weeks after, however, news reached Krishnakanta that he had married a widow.

The old man tore up the will again : he wanted to make a fresh one.

Within a stone's throw of Krishnakanta's house there lived a man whose name was Brahmananda Ghose. He was a harmless man, and was a sort of protegee of Krishnakanta; for Krishnakanta liked him and helped him with money from time to time. Brahmananda was an excellent penman, and whenever there was a will or other document to be written he was, as a rule, asked to do it, for which he was paid something.

Krishnakanta tore up the will and sent for Brahmananda. "Come here," said he to Brahmananda, "after you have taken your meal. I want you to write a fresh will."

When Krishnakanta gave this injunction to Brahmananda Benodelal was there, and he said, "Why do you want to change the will again, father?"

"This time I want to disinherit your elder brother, and I am resolved to do it," said Krishnakanta in a serious tone of voice and looking very grave.

"Oh, that would be very cruel, father. You ought to think of his orphan child. You should not punish the innocent boy for the fault of his father."

"Well, I will give him one-sixty-fourth for his share in the property."

"Oh, that's almost nothing."

"How do you say so?" said Krishnakanta. "The income from my estate is nearly two lacs of rupees, and one-sixty-fourth or three pies' share means an income of upwards of three thousand rupees, and that's enough. I can't—I won't give more."

Benodelal tried hard to persuade his father, but the old man was firm.

CHAPTER II.

After he had eaten his meal Brahmananda was preparing to take his accustomed nap when Haralal stood before him. When he saw Haralal he was rather surprised.

"Hallo! my dear sir, you are coming from Calcutta?" he asked.

"Yes," said Haralal, sitting down on the bed near him. "I arrived two days ago; I have been hiding somewhere. Father is going to make a fresh will, eh?"

"I am told so," said Brahmananda.

"This time he is going to exclude me altogether."

"Is he? But, I don't think he is in earnest."

"I know he is," said Haralal. "You write the will of course?"

"Why, I can't refuse, you know," said Brahmananda.

"Nobody wants you to refuse," said Haralal. "But come, I want to give you something."

"What? a drubbing?" said Brahmananda with a laugh.

"Damn you," said Haralal. "I am serious. A thousand rupees. Would you like to take it?"

"Where is the fool who will not like to take it if he can get it for nothing?"

"I don't mean, for nothing," said Haralal. "If you wish to get it you will have to earn it."

"How? By marrying a widow?"

"Why, what harm is there?"

"None at all. But the thing is I am too old to marry. Don't you think I am?"

"Well, apart from jokes," said Haralal, "I want you to do something—the thing I am here for, and which is of great importance to myself. A thousand rupees is a round sum, and I will give you a chance of earning it. I know you are the fit man, or I wouldn't come to you." And he put a bundle of fresh currency notes in Brahmananda's hand. "I pay you five hundred

rupees in advance," he said, "and you must set about the business at once."

Brahmananda counted the notes in his hand. "What shall I do with this money?" he said, looking up to Harlal's face.

"You may hoard it, if you like."

"But what is it you wish me to do?" asked Brahmananda.

"To begin with, then," said Harlal, "make two pens so that both will write alike."

"That's easily done," said Brahmananda. And he made two pens, which he did so skillfully that when he wrote with them to test their reliability both writings were found to have exactly the same appearance.

"For the present," said Harlal, "put one of these two pens in your box. When you go to write the will take it with you, for you must write with this pen. The other should be used in writing what I shall dictate to you. You have good ink in your house of course?"

Brahmananda took out his ink pot, and taking a dip of ink formed a few letters with his pen.

Harlal looked closely at the writing. "This ink will do," he said. "Take your inkstand with you when you are going to write the will."

"Why, what's the good? You have pen and inkstand in your house," said Brahmananda.

"You must do as I tell you, and not question me," said Harlal. "You can easily understand that since I pay you so much money I have some motive in wanting you to take this pen and inkstand with you."

"Oh, certainly. I didn't think of it."

Harlal then placed two sheets of blank paper in Brahmananda's hand.

"Oh, this is just the sort of paper your father uses in writing documents," said Brahmananda.

"I know that and that is why I procured them," said Harlal. "Now write with this pen and ink what I am going to dictate."

Brahmananda wrote a will to Harlal's dictation. The purport of it was that Krishnakanta Roy willed three-fourths of his property to his son Harlal, saving three-sixteenths to Bendelal, and the remaining one-sixteenth

equally among his wife, Gobindalal, Soihlati and Harlal's boy.

"Now who is to sign this?" said Brahmananda when he had finished writing.

Harlal took the will from his hand, and wrote Krishnakanta Roy's name and the names of four witnesses in it.

"Why, this is a forged will," said Brahmananda.

"Yes," said Harlal, "but I will tell you what to do."

"What is that?" asked Brahmananda.

"When you go to write the will, take this concealed in your shirt pocket. Write what father will dictate. When, after you have finished writing, and the will has been read out and signed, you take it up to put your signature to it, which you must do with your back turned to all, you will take this opportunity of changing the will, which you can easily do. There can be no suspicion, for both wills must be very like in appearance, the writer and paper, and the pen and ink being the same in both cases. Then you give my will to father, and bring father's to me."

Brahmananda reflected a little, and then said, "It is a very clever idea to be sure."

As he was, however, silent for a while Harlal asked, "What is it you are pondering in your mind?"

"I dare not have any concern in this business," said Brahmananda. "Take your money back."

Harlal held out his hand to receive the notes, and he was just about to leave the room when Brahmananda called him back. "When do you pay the rest?" he asked, finding it very difficult to overlook such a tempting offer.

"When the thing has been done, and you have brought my father's will to me," said Harlal.

The temptation, I must confess, is much too great to resist.

"You accept the offer then?"

"I cannot help accepting it," said Brahmananda. "But I think it is very difficult to change the will, and very much fear I shall be caught in the act."

"Well," said Harlal, "I will do it before your eyes, and let me see if you can detect it."

Harlal certainly possessed some skill in sleight of hand as in imitating another's

handwriting. He put the will in his pocket, and taking a piece of paper made as if he would write something on it, when in a trice the will in his pocket and the paper in his hand had changed places without Brahmananda's perceiving anything at all.

Brahmananda praised his dexterity of hand. "I will teach you how to do it," said Haralal to him. And he made Brahmananda practise the trick under his guidance for nearly a couple of hours until he had quite mastered it.

Haralal then took his leave, saying that he would call again in the evening.

When he had gone a great fear seized on Brahmananda. If he carried out what he had taken in hand, and was caught, he was sure to be dragged to court; and who knew but he might, for the gravity of his offence, be imprisoned for life. There could be nothing more foolish than to engage in such a risky affair as this. Though he thus debated in his mind he still wavered, but at last he resolved to have nothing to do with the business.

CHAPTER III

Brahmananda returned home after dark, having finished the business of writing the will. Almost as soon as he set foot in the house he met Haralal, who had been eagerly awaiting his return.

"All right?" asked Haralal.

"I wish I could get the moon to give to you, but to wish is not to have," said Brahmananda with a sardonic laugh.

"You have failed to carry it out then?" again asked Haralal.

"Oh, I felt too nervous. I am very sorry I couldn't do it."

With this Brahmananda returned the forged will, and the bundle of notes to Haralal.

Haralal was in a great passion. He almost shook with rage. "Fool!" he exclaimed, "I least thought you would disappoint me. But you are worse than useless. To have failed to do what could be done by a woman! Shame on you! I am off; but should any one get the scent of what passed between you and me, I will not spare you."

"Oh, never fear," said Brahmananda. "I will not breathe a word of it to any one."

Leaving him Haralal went round and looked into the kitchen where Brahma-

nanda's niece, Rohini, was busied in, preparing the evening meal. At Brahmananda's house he was quite free to look in where he liked.

Rohini was young and handsome. She was a widow, but she never much cared to live as a high caste Hindu widow ought. She loved to pay attention to her person and dress, and she wore the few ornaments which she had got at her marriage. However, she certainly abstained from eating fish. In matters of food, like all other widows in gentle families, she was strictly a vegetarian. Besides her personal attractions, which were by no means inconsiderable, she possessed certain accomplishments; for example, she excelled in cookery, could use the needle with skill, and was known to have a knack in certain other things requiring ingenuity. She was liked by her neighbours, for she was useful to them. Her late husband's parents and hers had been long dead; so she lived under the care of her uncle, who being a single man, loved her as his own child for her obedience and for attending to every household work besides her regularly attending to the duties of the kitchen.

While she was engaged in cooking, a tabby cat, that lay near the door with her head resting between her fore paws, was looking wistfully at some fried fish held in a plate. Rohini's attention happening to be attracted towards her, she cast a menacing look at the animal. But the cat, instead of taking it as a hint for her to be off, took it as an invitation to come and have a taste of the fish. So she rose to her feet, and was just about to approach the plate when Haralal entered the kitchen. His sudden appearance and the creaking of his shoes put the cat to flight.

Seeing Haralal Rohini drew her veil a little over her face, and rising and standing with her eyes looking on the ground, asked, "When did you come home, uncle?" Rohini called Haralal uncle although she had no relation with him.

"I came yesterday. A word with you, Rohini," said Haralal.

She was rather amazed. "Will you take your meal here, uncle?" she asked.

"I can't say now; I may," said Haralal.

"Rohini," he said again, fixing his eyes on her, "do you remember when you took a journey to the Ganges to bathe? It was on a memorable occasion; and it happened that on your way back you were

separated from the people with whom you went."

"Yes," said Rohini with her eyes still fixed on the ground.

"You lost your way," he went on; "and you got into a field where you came in the way of some bad characters. You remember it well of course?"

"Oh yes, I do."

"Why were they after you? They had a bad motive. It was I who delivered you from their hands."

"You happened at that time to be riding across," said Rohini. "Oh, I can never forget it. How I wish I could do something to show my gratitude to you."

"Yes, you can do something for me, Rohini, if you wish to. There cannot be a more opportune time for it than the present. I am sure you can do it, for it is not a difficult thing to do. Now, will you do it for me? Say, will you?"

"Yes, I will," said Rohini. "I can even lay down my life, if necessary, to do you service."

"Bravely spoken. I am right glad to hear that you are ready to serve me. Well, you may have heard that father has made a fresh will in which he has excluded me altogether from any share in his property. Here is a false will I have prepared just as if it were made by my father. All you have to do is to bring me his will, putting this in its place. You can do it, I know, for you are very intelligent. Besides you are quite free in our house, and my father likes you very much."

Rohini shuddered. "Oh, I cannot do that," said she; "no, not even for all the property of your father. Anything but that, and I will most willingly do it."

"Don't decide so hastily," said Haralal. "It is not too much I ask of you, and you know you are in debt to me."

"Oh, I can't do it. It is against my conscience," said Rohini.

"You women are worthless," he said a little vexed. "It is all talk with you."

"I cannot steal the will," said Rohini. "Have we not eaten your father's salt? Would you have me be faithless to him?"

When Haralal saw that it was useless to try to induce her by argument, he said, "Here, Rohini—here is a thousand rupees for you. You must do it for me. You must—there's a good girl."

Rohini declined the offer with thanks.

"What you propose," said she, "is highly objectionable, and therefore I must refuse to do it."

"Rohini," sighed Haralal, "you are nothing to me; so I should not be surprised at your refusing to do what I ask of you. Had my wife been living now I should have had no need to ask you. She would have done it for me, I know she would."

Rohini smiled.

"What makes you smile?" asked Haralal.

"The mention of your wife," said Rohini, "puts me in mind of the report that you wish to marry a widow. Do you really mean to do so?"

"Why, yes; but it is difficult to find one to my liking."

"I may tell you what we think," said Rohini. "We can never like to see you remain a widower all your life. You ought to marry again, if not for your own sake, for the sake of your child at any rate. We should be happy indeed to see you take a wife. And we don't care whether it be an unmarried girl or a widow you choose for your partner in life."

"Widow marriage," said Haralal, "is not forbidden by the shastras."

"I am told so," said Rohini.

"Why don't you marry again, Rohini? I have no objection to you, not at all, for you are young, handsome and useful."

Rohini blushed, drew her veil so as to completely hide her face, and sat down again to mind what she was about.

"Well, it is useless to wait any longer, so I must be off," said Haralal, fetching a deep sigh. And he had walked up to the door, and was just about to leave the kitchen when Rohini called to him, saying, "I cannot bear to see you go disappointed. You may leave the will. I shall see what I can do."

Haralal's face grew bright. He returned and put the will and the bundle of notes in her hand.

"Take your money," said Rohini. "If I do it, I will do it for your sake, not for the sake of your money."

Haralal gave her many thanks; and he took his leave, saying that he was very pleased with her.

CHAPTER IV.

At about eight o'clock that night Krishnakanta Roy was reclining on a

luxurious couch in his bedroom, smoking a curly pipe with a golden mouthpiece, and dozing under the influence of his favourite intoxicating drug, opium, of which he usually took a large quantity. He was in a drowsy state, between sleeping and waking, and dreaming of odd and strange things. He dreamed that Harnal had bought the whole of his property at a nominal price of Rs. 50. Again it seemed to him that he had lost all his goods and money and landed property, and was worse off than a man in the street. At another time he thought that somebody had stealthily entered the room with the intention of filching his opium, which he always kept safely locked up in his chest of drawers. While he was in the midst of one of such dreams, Rohini entered the chamber very softly. "You are sleeping, grandpa?" she said, approaching the bed with a cautious tread. Rohini called him grandpa and loved to cut jokes with him.

"Who are you? Nundy?" said Krishnakanta. "When did you leave the hills? Where is your master?"

"Who do you mean, grandpa?" asked Rohini.

"Who do I mean? I mean your master—your master, the chief of the gods, whose abode is among the snow-capped mountains. What a noodle you are, Nundy!"

"Why do you want him?" again asked Rohini.

"Tell your master I cannot lead him the money he wants except on good security. Do you understand?"

"Oh, are you dreaming, grandpa?"

This roused Krishnakanta from his dream. "Who are you? Rohini?" he asked, watching her narrowly from under his half-closed eyelids. "You look charming to night, lassie. I am not so old as you think. Have you any objection to me?"

"None at all," said Rohini with a laugh.

"Oh, so glad. What do you want? Come for opium, I suppose?"

"What have I to do with opium?" she laughed. "But I know you can't spare any of your opium. It is more precious to you than gold and silver."

"Then what are you here for?" said Krishnakanta.

"Uncle says that he thinks you forgot to put your signature to the will."

"How is that? I am sure I didn't."

"How am I to know? He says it was

an oversight, and that is why he has sent me to you."

"It is very strange. I well remember I put my signature, and I think there can be no mistake about it."

"What's the good of talking?" said Rohini. "Had you not better look at the will to make sure?"

"Well, then take that light there," said Krishnakanta to her. And he rose and took a key from underneath the pillow on which he had been resting his head, and opened a little fancy box with it. Out of it he took a curious key and opened a drawer while Rohini was holding the light, and having groped for a while drew out the will with a rather shaky hand. Then from another box he took out his spectacles, and having fixed them on his nose with some difficulty, for he felt a little drowsy at the time, looked for his signature in the will.

"Here you are," he exclaimed. "Here is my signature, Rohini. I think I am not too old to remember anything."

"Certainly you are not," said Rohini with a smile. "But I will go now and tell it to my uncle." With this she left him and was quickly gone.

It was midnight, and Krishnakanta was fast asleep in his bed. Suddenly he awoke and thought he found the room was dark. Usually a lamp burnt all night in his room; and he seemed to wonder why there was no light. Presently he thought he heard a sound of the turning of a key. It even seemed to him that somebody was moving in the room, and that he came and gently handled the pillow on which he was resting his head. But he was so deeply under the influence of opium that he could apprehend nothing clearly. He was not quite sure there was no light in the room, for he was so drowsy that he could hardly open his eyes. When he opened them for a moment he thought the room was dark; but he imagined that he was in jail. Presently it seemed to him that he heard a creaking sound, and he thought it was the warder locking up the cell. After a little time he woke up again. He felt for his pipe, but could not find it. "Here, Hari," he called for the servant who slept near his master's bedroom at night.

Krishnakanta slept in a room half way between the inner and the outer part of his house. He called and dropped off into sleep again. Within this short space of

time his will was removed and a false will was substituted in its place

(To be continued)

Translated by

D C Roy

AFTER THE WAR IN INDIA

By DR SUDHINDRA BOSE M A, PH D, LECTURER IN THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA, U S A, AUTHOR OF 'SOME ASPECTS OF BRITISH RULE IN INDIA'

THESE are cataclysmic times threatening to take the world back to the midnight of barbarism. We are witnessing the most horrible man-made calamity since the world began, the Christian nations of Europe are rending one another with the fury of the wild beasts of Africa. It is such a savage brutalizing struggle that it heggars all description. With cannon and rifle fire with flaming liquids and poisonous gases countries have been devastated towns and cities left in black ruins thrones shaken in the dust, nations trampled down and peoples wiped out like so many figures on the board. Sacred treaties between governments have been blown away in the blast as if they were but shreds of paper. The whole fabric of international relations is tottering and is on the verge of collapse, and the end is not yet.

Dreadful as is the catastrophe, it promises to inaugurate an enlightened era for Europe. If the French Revolution achieved only a partial emancipation of European nations who can deny that the present war will complete the process? Men who are intimately in touch with the inner European political circles do not hesitate to say that whoever wins Poland will be free. Indeed the Czar of Russia has already declared his intention, apparently with the approval of the allies to restore the ancient boundaries of Poland and give its inhabitants a complete autonomy. The Czar has also suspended the Russianizing campaign against Finland and promised a more liberal policy towards the Finns. Thus Russia the strongest citadel of reaction has started full speed on a process

of entire renewal." This is only a small beginning. The war will also produce many beneficent results for France and England. They will have—to quote Lincoln's phrase of other days—a new birth of freedom. And what of Germany?

Nowhere will the ideals of democracy," assures Count Herman Keyserling the distinguished Russian philosopher, "gain more grounds than on German soil." It may be therefore that even such a frightful disaster as this war is a blessing in disguise for Europe.

But what will be the destiny of India after the war? In the terrible tempest of blood and iron which has hurst upon Europe, India as a member of the British empire has found herself ranged on the side of England. And already India has contributed mightily with immense sacrifices of blood and treasure to English success. Indeed the gold the blood, the spirit of Hindustan, as it appears at this distance, have become essential to the triumph of allied arms. No nation can, however afford to be led into a war for empty sentiment for mere motives of self-abnegation and self-denial. The days of the knight-errant are over. Wars of sentiment do not belong to the twentieth century world life. They belong to the time of King Arthur's Round Table. The modern war can find its justification in the protection and advancement of national interests. And since Indians may not be particularly keen about constituting themselves as an evangelist agency the questions to be asked in India are: What will Hindustan obtain as the equivalent of her great contributions? How should her sacrifices be transformed into substan

bitterly being robbed of any part of his speech. So though it kept more important business waiting, I had to hear him out.

18.

Kaligram,
1891.

Oh, how I love this great, old Earth of ours, lying there so quietly! I feel I want to clasp in my arms the whole immensity of her, with her trees and foliage, rivers and fields, her sounds and her silences, her mornings and evenings.

What heaven is there which can give us the like of the earthly riches she has bestowed on us? Other things heaven may have, for aught I know, but where shall I get the intimate kinship of this tenderly weak, appealingly tremulous, immature humanity to offer us?

Thus dusty old Mother of ours,—our very own Earth,—in her golden fields, on the banks of her bounteous rivers, amidst

the joys and sorrows of her loving households, brings to our door the tear-begotten wealth of her poor, mortal children. We, with our sad destiny, cannot even keep and save her loved ones, whom cruel, unknown forces snatch away off her very breast; and still the poor old thing goes on doing the very best she can for them. I do love her so!

A vast melancholy overshadows her countenance, as though she is weighed down by the thought: 'Daughter of the gods am I, yet their power has been denied me. I love, but cannot keep; I begin, but cannot complete; I give birth, but cannot save from death.'

For that I cannot forgive heaven; and so I doubly love the home of my humble old Mother Earth, just because she is so weak, so helpless, so distracted with loving anxieties.

Translated by
SURENDRANATH TAGORE.

KRISHNAKANTA'S WILL

BY BANKIM CHANDRA CHATTERJEE.

(All rights reserved)

CHAPTER V.

NEXT morning Haralal walked straight to Brahmananda's house. When he got there, without stopping he went and peeped into the kitchen. Rohini was there busy in cooking. She pretended not to see him even when he stepped up and stood near her. "Look at me, Rohini, the pot won't crack," said Haralal.

Rohini looked up with a smile.

"Have you got it?" he asked.

She made no answer, but went and brought him what he wanted. Haralal knew at a glance that it was his father's will. A sinister smile was on his face.

"How did you get it?" he asked.

Rohini began her story. She invented one; and she took the will from his hand to show how it lay between two boxes, which stood upon the chest of drawers. When she had finished speaking she left him abruptly. Haralal, not seeing the will

in her hand when she returned, asked, "Where is the will?"

"I have kept it," said Rohini.

"I want to be going now. I must have it," said Haralal.

"Why, I think there is no haste."

"I cannot afford to wait. I must be off."

"Well, if you must, I will not detain you," said Rohini.

"The will? Let me have the will. Don't keep me waiting for it."

"You may leave it with me," said Rohini.

"Nonsense, I must have it."

"Whether it is with you or me, it is all the same."

"How? Why did you steal it if you will not give it to me?"

"When you have married a widow, I will give it to your wife."

Haralal pretended not to see what she was driving at, and only said, "Don't

detain me any longer. You want money, I can see. Let me know what sum will satisfy you."

"I don't want money; you know what I want," she said quietly, and evidently fighting against shyness.

"I am sorry I cannot comply with your wish," said Haralal. "If I have forged, I have done it for my own good. You stole; can you say why you did it?"

Robini was astounded.

"Whatever I am" continued Haralal, "still I am Krishnakanta Roy's son. I cannot take to wife one who stole."

His words cut her like a whip. She rose to her feet abruptly; and pushing back her veil, and flinging an angry and scornful look at him, said, "Who told me to steal? Who put the temptation before me? Who was so silky and smooth in order to deceive a poor woman by taking advantage of her simplicity? Can there be anything more wicked and dishonourable than this? And you plume yourself on being the son of Krishnakanta Roy! Shame on you. Had you been a woman I wouldn't have spared the broom. But a wretch as you are, I allow you to depart in peace."

Haralal was cowed by her sudden and very bold attack. A malicious smile was on his face, and he withdrew without uttering a word.

CHAPTER VI.

Brahmananda had no servants in his house because he was a poor man. Whether to have servants is a blessing or no blessing we do not know; but of this we are sure that in a house where there are no servants there are no such things as lying and backbiting and quarrel. There is very often a scene in a family where there are a number of female servants. They can never agree, and whenever they can get an opportunity they fail not to break the peace of the house by quarrelling, and accusing and abusing one another.

Brahmananda had no servants, and therefore there was peace in his house. As for female members he had none except his niece, Rohini. She kept the house scrupulously clean. She cooked food, drew water, scoured the plates and performed every other household work quietly and without a murmur. Their drinking water she fetched in a pot every day from a particular tank, called the Baruni tank, which was at a little distance from their

house. This was the best and largest tank in their village. The water of it was good enough for drinking purposes, and it was so clear that one could see to the bottom.

On the day following the one on which she had an altercation with Haralal she was going to the tank to fetch water as usual, and she looked so sad and disappointed. It was the time of spring, and nature wore a smiling look. Everywhere the trees were in blossom, and the air was laden with a sweet perfume. There were the koels* whose loud clear calls were heard from time to time. On other days their notes made no impression on her mind, but on this day when she heard them a strange feeling came over her. She thought as if she had lost something; as if something was wanting; as if her life was a blank. She thought of her late husband, and of her lonely state of a widow of her age, and of widow-marriage, which she had heard was not forbidden by the shastras. "Why should I not," she said to herself, "enjoy my spring of life? What great sin have I committed that I should be doomed thus to suffer? There is Gohindal's wife. How happy she is. She has got such a nice young husband. And here am I, a hapless woman, destined to toil and go without a single comfort in life."

As she was thus musing a thrilling sonorous coo-oo hurst forth from among the trees near by, which made her look around with a start. "Hold your tongue, you rascally knave; you awaken painful feelings in me," she said. These words were addressed to the poor bird, which of course meant no offence.

In a little time Rohini reached the tank; but she felt so miserable that she sat down to weep.

CHAPTER VII.

The Baruni tank with its double border, one of grass, whose growth was regularly kept in check by the mowers, and the other next, of a garden on its embankment, looked, as it lay, like a mirror with the trees beautifully reflected on its clear waters. The tank, and the garden enclosed with a wall belonged to Krishnakanta Roy. Rohini was weeping, sitting on one of the landing stairs. The sun was near its setting. From among the trees on the embankment somebody was watching her.

* In Sanskrit poetry the notes of the koel in spring are held to excite feelings of love.

It was Gobindalal. He wondered why she was weeping. His conjecture, however, was that she might have quarrelled with somebody. How was he to know what actually the cause of her sorrow was? However, he felt pity for her. He thought he would go and inquire.

The sun was down. The cattle were being driven home from the field, the lowing herd moving on at a quick pace, kicking up the dust with their feet. By and by the shades of evening closed in. The waters of the tank looked black, and the herds took shelter among the trees. Then the moon rose, shedding its silvery beams upon the earth. But Rohini—she was still there and weeping, her head leaning on her right hand. "Why, I think I will ask why she is weeping," said Gobindalal to himself. He rose to go to her.

"Rohini," said he, going down very quietly to her, "why are you weeping? What is the matter with you?"

Rohini started and looked up. Knowing at a glance who the speaker was, she quickly rose to her feet and stood, holding her head down, and without saying a word.

"What's your trouble, Rohini?" he continued. "Let me know it. I may be of service to you."

She was still silent.

Gobindalal was somewhat grave and reserved. He was not given to flirting, nor was he ever known to talk lightly to any woman. Among the young people of the village he was more respected and held in greater esteem than his cousins. Besides he was a very handsome young man. Rohini respected him. This day, however, when he spoke to her she loved him she knew not why, and thought she could die for him.

"Well," said Gobindalal again after a pause, "if it is anything you cannot say yourself, let me know it through my wife or any other woman belonging to our house. I give you the assurance that if in anything you require my help you shall have it."

Rohini spoke now and said, "I will tell you; but not to-day. I will tell you all, and it is my earnest request that you will be pleased to listen to me."

Gobindalal readily complied, and left her.

Rohini filled her pot, and went home a lighter heart.

CHAPTER VIII.

On getting home Rohini engaged herself in preparing the evening meal. This day she managed to get it ready earlier than usual. Brahmananda had his meal, but Rohini touched no food, for she had no inclination for it. She shut herself up in her room, not to go to bed but to consider what should be done regarding the will.

We have two counsellors, one, our conscience, which always tells us to do what is right, and the other, the devil in us, that delights in leading us astray.

Rohini's conscience said, "It was very wicked of you to steal the will."

"How?" said she or rather the devil in her. "I haven't given it to Haralal."

"You must return it to Krishnakanta," said her conscience.

"Bah!" said she, "when he demands how I got the will or how came the false will in his drawer, what shall I say? Would you have me be handed over to the police?"

"Then why don't you," said her conscience, "go to Gobindalal and own everything to him? He is a kind man. If you fall on your knees before him and ask his protection he will not refuse it you."

"But Gobindalal," said she, "will have to tell all to Krishnakanta. And if Krishnakanta hand me over to the police, how can Gobindalal protect me? I think it is better to keep quiet now. When the old man is dead I will give the will to Gobindalal. And I will throw myself at his feet and ask his pardon."

"Of what avail would it then he?" said her conscience. "The will that will be found in Krishnakanta's house will of course be taken as genuine. If Gobindalal produce his uncle's will, it won't stand, and he will be accused of forgery."

"Well, I know better what to do," she said. "I will keep quiet about it; and that is, I think, the best and safest course to adopt under the circumstances."

So she set light by the dictates of her conscience, and resolved in her mind to keep quiet about the will. Then her thoughts glided spontaneously to Gobindalal. How very gentle and obliging and handsome he was! How she loved and admired him! What would she not give to win his love? Her imagination painted him as beautiful as a rainbow. She thought of him and wept and thought and wept

again. Thus she passed the night, and she had not so much as a wink of sleep.

CHAPTER IX.

Days passed, and Rohini had conceived a great passion for Gobindalal. She had been seeing him from a girl, but she had never experienced feelings such as she experienced now. What had wrought this change? Not the notes of the koels, nor the delightful time of spring when everything in nature is fresh and fragrant, unless they were as helps to bringing it about. The kind words he spoke to her that evening had impressed her deeply. They were as balm to her afflicted heart. She thought of the trick played upon her by Haralal. A thousand times she wished she had not stolen the will. By contrast Gobindalal seemed an angel.

If Rohini could have foreseen what was at the end of the path she was going to pursue, she would certainly have recoiled in horror. Could Gobindalal love her? What would she do if he could not? If she was to live to drudge and toil, why should she not die? What hope or comfort had she? And drowning she had heard was the best and easiest of all means of suicide.

She was, however, keenly sensible of, the wrong she had done to Gobindalal by stealing the will. So she resolved she would go and get the forged will and put Krishnakanta's will again where it was in the drawer.

At midnight she set off to Krishnakanta's house to replace the will. There was no getting in at the back-door which was always shut early, and she was to pass through the gateway where, she knew, the porters usually sat up till very late at night. On this night they were singing songs. As she entered they stopped her and demanded who she was. On her saying that she was the companion of her master's daughter they allowed her to pass. As the house was well-guarded the door of Krishnakanta's bed-room was kept open at night. Rohini knew it. Before entering she stopped to listen. Krishnakanta was lying on his back and snoring. He was apparently fast asleep. She went in, taking good care not to make any noise. A candle was burning, which she extinguished at once on entering. Next she procured the key as before, and opened the drawer in which she had left the forged will. But somehow, as she turned the

key in the lock, in spite of her using great caution there was a little creaking sound, which roused Krishnakanta.

He wondered what the noise was about, and kept stock-still with his ears pricked up to listen.

When the snoring had ceased Rohini knew that Krishnakanta had awaked. She stood perfectly still.

"Who is there?" cried Krishnakanta.

There was no answer. Rohini was not what she used to be when there was nothing to disturb her peace of mind. She was much pulled down; and she seemed now not a little frightened, for her breathing was quick and audible.

Krishnakanta called for his servant, Hari. He called more than once, but in vain. His match box he had to his hand. With the aid of a match he lighted the candle, and discovered a woman standing near the chest of drawers.

Rohini would have been able to escape when she perceived that Krishnakanta had awaked, but she did not for Gobindalal's sake. She thought that the will must be replaced, and did not care for her safety.

"Who are you?" demanded Krishnakanta.

Rohini drew near to him and said, "I am Rohini."

"Rohini!" he cried. "What have you been doing here in the dark, and at such a late hour of the night?"

"I was trying to steal your will," she said.

"I am now in no mood for your jests. Come, tell me what you were about here. I do not believe you got in here to steal my will, but the circumstances I have caught you under are very suspicious."

"In your presence I will do what I came here for," said Rohini. "Afterwards you may deal by me as you think proper." With this she stepped up, opened the drawer and replaced the will, having taken out the forged one, which she was soon after hastily tearing to pieces.

"Oh, stop, stop, what is it you are tearing?" cried the old man in great alarm. "Let me see it. Oh, stop, do."

But before he could see what it was, Rohini had consigned the torn pieces of the will to the flame of the candle and turned them into ashes in no time.

"What have you burnt?" cried Krishnakanta, looking up to her, in a great passion.

"A will, a forged will," said Rohini.

"Will What will? Where is my will? where is it? Tell me, quick," cried the old man in the greatest of excitement.

"Your will is in the drawer," said Rohini coolly. "You can see it you like." She said this with such careless indifference that Krishnakanta was astonished.

He, however, took out his spectacles, adjusted them to his nose, and having satisfied himself that his will was all safe where he had kept it, turned to her and said, "Then what was it you destroyed?"

"A forged will," said Rohini.

"Forged will? Of whose making was it? Where did you get it?"

"I found it in the drawer," said Rohini. "I do not know by whom it was prepared."

"You do not know? How came you to know it was in the drawer?"

"That I will not tell you," said Rohini.

Krishnakanta reflected a while. "Rohini," he said at length, "you are but a girl; you are greatly mistaken if you think that I cannot find out what the fact is. The forged will was of Haralal's preparing. You were bribed to steal for him my will and put the forged one in its place. But you couldn't do it, being found out, and so you destroyed the false will. Come, is it not true?"

"No, it is not," said Rohini.

"Then what is true?" said Krishnakanta, surveying her from head to foot.

"Please don't ask me. I have been found in your room under suspicious circumstances, and you may deal with me as you like."

"Well," said he, "that you came here with a bad intention there is no doubt, and I must punish you as you deserve. I will not hand you over to the police, but I will have you turned out of the village to-morrow. And I will see you in disgrace by having your head shaven in the presence of all my men and the neighbours. For to-night you shall remain in confinement."

Rohini was locked up in a room for the night.

CHAPTER X.

The grey dawn of morning was breaking over the world. A gentle breeze was blowing, and if the cuckoos were not yet heard there were other birds that had already begun their songs. At this delightful time of morning Gobindalal went and stood at the open window of his bed-

room. Here he was quickly joined by a very pretty looking girl.

"What makes you come here?" said Gobindalal.

"And you—what are you here for?" said the girl.

The reader need not be told that the girl is Gobindalal's wife.

"I am here to enjoy the morning breeze a while," said her husband.

"And why should I not enjoy it too? Why should you have this pleasure all to yourself, you selfish man?"

Gobindalal's wife's name was Bhramar. The term Bhramar means black bee. Her husband jokingly used to remark that she was given that name on account of the dark look of her skin. But although her complexion was dark, she was well-formed, and the cast of her face was beautiful. She was a very good and affectionate wife, and her husband loved her dearly.

"My dear, you always look charming in your nose-ring," said her husband. "I like this sort of trinket best because you look so lovely in it."

"You naughty man," said she, giving him a gentle pull by the nose. "I know you do not mean what you say."

"Oh, I do, my love," said he, as he held up her face in both hands and imprinted a kiss on her lips.

Presently an uproar was heard. "What's this noise about?" said Gobindalal.

"It is the servants, the ever noisy and quarrelsome set," said Bhramar.

The servants were up very early as usual; and a little while ago the *shup-shup* of the brooms, and the splashing of water and the tinkling of the plates showed that they were busy in sweeping and cleaning and washing and scouring. But suddenly these noises ceased, and a great clamour followed.

"I will go and see what is the matter," said Bhramar. And she left her husband and ran downstairs.

The women-servants were a very troublesome set in the house, and could hardly be kept under control even by Bhramar's mother-in-law who was the mistress of the house.

"What's all this noise about? What's the matter," cried Bhramar as soon as she appeared before them. They paid no heed to her words. As soon as they saw her they burst into loud exclamations of astonishment. "I am sure I have

heard such a thing in my life," said one. Another cried, "How daring! I wish I could teach her a good lesson with my broom!" A third wished she could cut off her nose and ears. A fourth said she ought to hang for it. A fifth, however, observed that she should say nothing, considering that she knew nothing for certain. No sooner did the last speaker utter these words than the rest turned sharply upon her and taunted her, saying that she was too good and honest a woman to make herself a busybody in things that did not concern her. They made other cutting remarks, and were so clamorous in condemning her as a hypocrite that at last Bhramar cried, "Hold your tongues, you noisy rabble. I wish I could have you taught a good lesson for creating this disturbance in the house. Why don't you hang yourselves and let us be rid of you?"

At these words they set up a great howl, complaining that it was very hard that because they were servants they must put up with hard words and insult for nothing. They said they were sure they did not know what their fault was except that they had no bread at home; and that they would certainly not submit to be insulted in order to earn it. One of them, an elderly woman, burst into loud sobs, saying that had she not lost a son at her lying-in some thirty years ago, she would never have to work for her bread, for he would have been the stay and support of her old age. Bhramar, who was a jovial young lady, could not restrain her laughter at her words. "You fools," she cried, "why don't you say what has happened? Who is the person you would have taught a good lesson?"

When she had said that, there was a clamour again. They expressed their wonder at her not having heard the startling news that a robbery had been committed

in the house, and gave her a highly coloured account of what they had heard. What Bhramar, however, could judge to be the fact was that Rohini had stolen into Krishnakanta's bedroom for some hidden purpose, been found out and kept in detention. She returned to her husband and told him what was the matter.

"What do you think of her, dear?" said Gobindalal. "Do you believe Rohini went into his room to steal?"

"I don't believe it," said Bhramar.

"Why? What's your reason for your not wishing to believe it?"

"What do you think of her?"

"I would like to hear from you first," said Gobindalal.

"Well, because I never heard anything against her, and I have always held a good opinion of her ever since I came to know her."

"You don't mean that," said Gobindalal with a smile. "Shall I say why you wish to take her side?"

"Why?" asked Bhramar.

"Because she likes you very much, and can never bear to hear any remark made about your complexion."

"You naughty man, you are always for finding fault with my complexion. But I am as God made me, and I don't care what you or other people think of the look of my skin."

"I will go and see what I can do," said Gobindalal.

"Oh, poor girl! You must plead for her. You must try and see her set free."

"You have such a good and feeling heart, my dear," said Gobindalal, "and I am so happy with you." With this he kissed her and left the room.

(To be continued.)

TRANSLATED BY D. C. ROY.

AN URGENT DEMAND FOR PREPAREDNESS IN INDIA

THOSE who have studied the Indian problem from the standpoint of world politics can realize that the Indian situation is not so safe as the common people think.

The greatest problem for the Indian people in the coming decade is how far they are ready to preserve their integrity as a part of the British Empire. The people of India should not sleep in the belief that

CHAPTER XII.

been wandering boy? But I don't mind telling over again."

When he had finished speaking Gobindalal said, "What do you intend to do with her, uncle? You are not going to hand her over to the police, of course?"

"Police!" said Krishnakanta. "What have I to do with the police? I am the police, I am the magistrate, I am the judge. What I will do is this: I will see her head shaven in the presence of all my men, and then have her sent out of my jurisdiction."

"Rohini," said Gobindalal, turning to her, "where did you get the forged will?"

"I found it in the drawer," said Rohini.

"Mark her rascality!" said Krishnakanta.

"Who put it there? You know of course, else what business had you to meddle with the drawer?"

"She won't tell you that," said Krishnakanta. "But I can see perfectly well what is really the matter. It is as clear as noon day. The forged will was of Haralal's preparing. She was bribed by him to steal my will and put the false will in its place. But as she couldn't do that, being found out, she burned up the forged will. That's the fact I tell you, though she won't confess to it."

"Rohini," said Gobindalal, "you have heard what your punishment will be. But if you will tell the truth without mincing any part of it, I will try and obtain pardon for you."

"I will not sue for pardon if the punishment is deserved by me," said Rohini.

"How defiant!" cried Krishnakanta.

"Will you let me alone with her, uncle, say for an hour?" asked Gobindalal.

"What for?" said his uncle.

"I want to get the truth out of her," said he. "Maybe she has her reasons for not wishing to tell it here."

"Well, I have no objection," said his uncle. "You may take her to your room and see if you can get the whole truth out of her."

Krishnakanta ordered a servant maid to take Rohini to Gobindalal's wife and keep guard over her.

When Gobindalal had gone, "Bad boy!" said Krishnakanta to himself. "I am fully mistaken if he has not taken a y to that girl."

A little after Rohini had left, Gobindalal walked into the inner parts of the house, ascended the stairs and entered his bedroom. His wife was there. She was seated at a little distance from Rohini, and was silent. She had wished to speak a word of comfort to her, but she abstained lest it might move her so as to make her burst into tears. As her husband entered she walked up and winked to him as a hint that she wished to have a word with him. He stepped out with her, and she took him aside and said, "What is Rohini here for? What's your business with her?"

"I have something to ask her in private," said Gobindalal.

"Why in private? What is it you wish to ask her?" said his wife.

"You are jealous, my dear," he said with a smile, giving her a quick glance. "There is no fear of my falling in love with Rohini."

The words uttered pointblank struck her with sudden shame. She left him abruptly, and, running downstairs, strolled into the kitchen.

"Tell me a story," she said to the female cook who was busy in preparing the meal, as she gave her in fun a pull by the hair. "I want an amusing story, one that will make me laugh, for I feel rather dull. You can tell it cooking."

"Why, my lady, a nice good time it is for story telling," she said. "But at night when I have leisure I will tell you a story that will make your sides split with laughter."

Meanwhile Gobindalal seated himself at a little distance before Rohini and said, "Now, girl, I hope you will tell me the honest truth and not try to keep anything back."

Rohini wanted to make a clean breast of everything to Gobindalal.

"Uncle says," continued he, "you stole into his room to secure his will and put a forged will in its place. Is it true?"

"No," said Rohini.

"What is true then?"

"It is useless to tell it, I fear," she said after a pause.

"Why?" asked Gobindalal.

"Because you will not believe my words."

"How do you know that?" said Gobin-

dalal. I know what to accept as true and what not. I sometimes believe what other people will not like to believe."

Rohini blessed him in her heart. "His inside," she said to herself, "is as good as his outside."

"Come, let me know the truth," continued Gobindalal, "and I may do you a kindness."

"How?"

"I may intercede with my uncle for you."

"If you do not . . . ?"

"You know what your punishment will be."

"Yes, I shall be disgraced and turned out of the village. But I do not care. I have lost my good name, and that is what makes me feel very miserable."

"Poor girl," thought Gobindalal, "she repents now for what she has done."

"I understand, Rohini," said he, "that the reproaches of your conscience is punishment enough for your guilt."

"Oh, I am very very unhappy," she said. "How I wish I had never done anything to lose my good name. But it can be restored, I know it can, if you would be kind to me."

"I do not know what I can do for you," said Gobindalal, "until I have had the whole truth."

"What do you want to know?"

"What was it you destroyed?"

"A forged will," said Rohini.

"Where was it?"

"In the drawer."

"You put it there, of course?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"I was persuaded by Haralal Babu to steal your uncle's will and put the false will of his making in its place."

"When did you steal it?"

"On the night of the very day it was written."

"Why did you steal again into his room last night?"

"To take away the false will and put your uncle's again where it was."

"What was in the false will?"

"In it your cousin's share was three-fourths of the whole property, and yours . . . one sixteenth."

"What made you think of replacing my uncle's will in the drawer?" said Gobindalal, fixing his eyes on Rohini.

She was silent.

"Come, I must have an answer to this," he said again.

Rohini knew not what answer to make. She loved him secretly; and now she thought of the gulf between them. Could he care to love her? It seemed to her he could not. And the thought so distressed her that she burst into tears.

"Why, what makes you weep, girl?" said Gobindalal in some surprise. "I am sure I said nothing that could hurt you."

"Oh, no, you never can, you are so very kind," she said. "But don't ask me, oh, don't, I pray. I cannot tell you. It is a secret which I must carry in my bosom to the end of my life. It is a great happiness, yet a great pain. I wish I had been dead. I wish I could die. It is a disease, a weakness for which there is no remedy."

He understood her. He saw her heart as in a mirror, and he very much pitied her.

"Don't talk of dying, Rohini," he said. "We all have our duties to perform for which we have come into the world. You sin to wish to go off before your time, and death never comes for courting, you know."

He paused for a moment, and then said, "Rohini, I think you will do well to live away."

"Why?" she said, looking at him.

"I wish we might never meet again," he said, speaking very seriously.

Rohini saw that he had her secret, and she hung down her head for shame. She was, however, happy that Gobindalal understood she loved him.

"You must leave this place, Rohini," he said again after a while, and in a rather decided tone of voice.

"If I must," said she, "I can be ready to leave at a moment's notice. I think I should like this change after all I have undergone here."

"I think," said he, "I will buy you a house in Calcutta. You can get your uncle to live with you as your guardian, and I will see that he has a place under a good master there."

"It is very kind of you to say that, sir, very; but I fear your uncle will not spare me."

"Well, I will see to that," he said. And he rose and left the room, bidding Rohini go to his wife.

CHAPTER XIII.

Krishnakanta was very indulgent towards his nephew. Gobindalal remembered

his promise to Rohini, and he thought that anyhow he must free her from the clutches of his uncle. He believed that his uncle loved him too well to refuse to pardon Rohini if he chose well to make the request. With this belief he went and entered Krishnakanta's room when the old man had withdrawn to it to take his usual nap after meal.

Krishnakanta was reposing on his couch. He was in a recumbent posture and dozing pipe in hand, his legs crossed and his back resting on a bolster. Gobindalal stood before the couch, thinking whether to rouse his uncle or not, and he concluded that he should not disturb his rest. He had just turned to leave the room when making a movement the old man knocked the spittoon at his head, which rolled and dropped to the floor with a noise, making him wake up with a start. Gobindalal hastened to pick up the spittoon and put it again in its former place.

"Gobindalal," said Krishnakanta, looking at him. "What do you want, my boy? Have you anything to say to me?"

"Oh, nothing particular, uncle," he said. "You may go to sleep. I mustn't disturb you now."

"I am sufficiently refreshed," said the old man. "I won't sleep any longer. Take your seat there, my lad."

Gobindalal sat down, as directed, on an armless cushioned chair near by, expecting his uncle would open a conversation by talking about Rohini, which would give him an opportunity of requesting him to pardon her, but he made no mention of her at all. Krishnakanta having cunningly guessed his business with him, talked only of business matters until the young man who could find no very great interest in them, began to exhibit signs of impatience, and the old man, who could well see that, laughed in his sleeve and enjoyed his disappointment and relaxation very much.

"The case pending in the judge's court will be taken up again on Monday next," said Krishnakanta.

"Yes, uncle," said Gobindalal rather abstractedly.

"My boy, you seem absent to-day. What's the matter with you?"

"Oh, nothing. May I go now?"

"Yes, if you want to," said his uncle, who could see that his mind was full of the thought of Rohini.

Gobindalal rose to leave, and he had

just walked up to the door when Krishnakanta called to him, saying, "Stop. I quite forgot to ask what success you had with Rohini."

Gobindalal resumed his seat, and told him all she had confessed, adding how very repentant she was, and expressing the hope that his uncle would be kind enough to forgive her.

"Well," said Krishnakanta after a little reflection, "if you are not for punishment of any kind you may let her off with a warning."

When he came out of the room Gobindalal felt happy, for he had never expected that his uncle would comply with his request so easily.

CHAPTER XIV.

Rohini loved Gobindalal. She felt it was very hard that she should be sent away from Haridragram. This so distressed her heart that when she came home she shut herself up in her room and sat down to weep.

"I will not go to Calcutta," she said to herself. "If I cannot see him I shall pine away and die. This Haridragram is my heaven. I will not go from here. If Gobindalal compels me to go, I will come back again. He will be angry with me? What do I care? I will not go. I had much rather die."

Her mind made up she rose, opened the door and set off to see Gobindalal. "O God," she sighed, "thou knowest my trouble, and how weak and helpless I am. Do thou quench my passion. Leave me not, O merciful father, to be consumed in its flame. He, whom I am going to see, is the source of intense pleasure—the source of extreme pain. But thou canst, O father, quiet my rebellious thoughts. Do thou in mercy give me sufficient strength of mind not to turn aside from the path of virtue. Have pity on me, O God, for unless thou help me I am undone."

The words she uttered in supplication brought no comfort to her troubled heart. Her passion, too strong in her, overruled her conscience, and she felt as weak and powerless as ever. In her agony she thought she would take poison or drown herself to give her sorrows the slip. In this very painful state of mind she went and appeared before Gobindalal.

"I am glad you are going to Calcutta,

Rohini," said Gobindalal. "And your uncle is going with you, is he not?"

"I did not speak to him about it," said Rohini, hanging her head.

"But you are sure you are going?" he said again.

"I am afraid I am not," she said without looking up.

"How is it? You told me you were going."

"I cannot go," she murmured.

"Well, I cannot compel you to, but I think you would do very well if you could make up your mind to live away for a time at least."

"May I ask what good can come of my living away?"

Gobindalal made no answer. He could never find it in his heart to tell pointblank that he had found out her secret. But he looked very serious and only said, "You can go, Rohini. I have nothing more to say to you."

Rohini came away. Tears flowed from her eyes as she thought that Gobindalal could not love her. She brushed them away quickly lest they should be noticed by any one.

Soon after Rohini had left, Bhramar entered the room. She wore, as usual, a cheerful look. Finding her husband very grave and thoughtful so that he did not at all seem to notice her presence, she stepped up lightly and touched him on the shoulder as she said, "Who is it you are thinking of?"

Gobindalal looked up with a slight start. "Who do you think it is, dear?" he said with a smile.

"You have been thinking of me, I know," she said gayly.

"No, indeed. It is some other person," he said giving her a sly look.

Bhramar fondly put her arms round his neck, and kissed him, saying, "Who is this person, dear? Will you not tell me?"

"What's the good?" said Gobindalal. "Go, see, dear, if the house have finished their meal."

"No; you must tell me first what I want to know."

"You will be angry if I tell you," he said, smiling.

"What do you care?" she said. "You must tell me, come."

"Well, since you insist on knowing," said Gobindalal, "I may tell you that the person I have been thinking of is Rohini."

"Why were you thinking of her?"

"I do not know."

"Fiddlesticks! You must tell me. It is not like you to hide anything from me."

"A man may think of a woman and not be to blame," said Gobindalal. "There is nothing very bad or improper in that, I suppose."

"One thinks of one he loves," said Bhramar. "I think of you because I love you."

"Well, if that be your argument, then I love Rohini," said her husband with a smile.

"It is false," she said. "You cannot love her. You love me, and I am your wedded and lawful wife."

"Well," said Gobindalal, "widows are to eat no animal food. The shastras prohibit them from eating it. But are there no widows who disregard this edict of the shastras?"

"If there be any," she said, "they are a bad and unfortunate set and should be condemned and pitied by all."

"Well, there are bad men as well as bad women. And I am unfortunately one of a bad and immoral set of men, because being a married man I love Rohini."

"You naughty man, how can you talk like this?" she said rather indignantly. "Oh, I am ashamed of you." And she turned to leave the room.

Gobindalal rose, caught her in his arms and kissed her over and over again. "No, Bhramar," he said, "it is not true I love Rohini, but Rohini loves me."

She made a sudden backward movement as if she felt the smart of the sting of a hornet. "The poor pitiful girl!" she exclaimed. "I hate her, I do hate her from the very core of my heart."

"Why, how you storm, my dear," said Gobindalal with a smile. "Poor girl! she has done no harm to you."

"She is angling after you, I can see. I cannot bear to hear that she loves you. The poor pitiful thing! I wish she were dead. And I should repeat the wish a thousand times. But I think I will give her a piece of advice."

"What's that, my dear?"

She paid no heed to her husband's question, and walking up to the door, cried, "Khirona, Khirona."

Khirona was the name of her own servant-maid. As she put in an appearance, Bhramar said, "Go, tell Rohini that I wish her to die. Do you understand?"

On the maid servant's coming back to tell her that Rohini wished to know the means she would have her employ to kill herself, 'Go back,' said Bhramar, "and tell her that she might drown herself by tying a pitcher round her neck."

"I say that's bad, my dear," said Gobindalal.

"Oh, never fear. She is not going to kill herself, you may depend on me. And I believe," she added, smiling, "she loves you too well to think of that."

CHAPTER XV

The garden on the embankment of the Baruni tank was Gobindalal's favourite resort. It was a delightful place, and every day he went regularly to spend the time of evening there. In it were several kinds of fruit trees and varieties of sweet-smelling flowers, the roses being the most prominent among them, which shed a sweet odour all round. Gobindalal loved to rove about among the flowers, stopping near a plant here and a plant there as his fancy led him. In one part of the garden there was a fine one-storied house furnished with pictures and other movables. Gobindalal loved to sit in a grove of variegated leaves where it was very cool in the time of summer. Near by on a pedestal was a stooping marble figure, in a sort of undress, of a lovely young woman pouring water over its feet out of a pot. Bhramar often used to come out to the garden with her husband, and she sometimes chose to dress the figure in a fine piece of cloth, or in a merry vein made a mock attempt to take the pot out of its hands at which her husband laughed.

This evening taking his accustomed

round Gobindalal went and sat down at the foot of the marble figure near by and looked listlessly below on the crystal waters of the Baruni tank. As he sat there he happened to look up and see a woman slowly descending the stairs of the ghat at the farther end of the tank. Though it was near dark, Gobindalal had no difficulty in finding out who it was. It was Rohini. In spite of her feeling very miserable she had come for water—a thing one cannot do without—her left hand encircling a pot, which she was holding on her waist. As she entered the water to wash herself Gobindalal out of decency, rose and moved away.

He strolled for about half an hour and then returned to his former place at the foot of the marble figure. The moon was up in the sky, which glittered on the clear waters of the tank. He looked toward the ghat. Not a soul was stirring. But he caught sight of a pot floating on the water. Whose pot was that? Could it be Rohini's? Could she be drowned in the tank? Then what Bhramar had sent to tell Rohini suddenly flashed into his mind. His heart misgave him. He ran down to the ghat. He looked about him into the water which was so clear that one could see to the bottom even in the moonlight. A little ahead of the ghat his eye detected what looked something like a human figure. He descended to the very last stair, and bending down peered into the water. He started. It was Rohini. There she was, her beauty lighting up, as it seemed to him, the gloomy bed on which she lay.

(To be continued)

TRANSLATED BY D. C. ROY.

WOODED IN ERROR

By CHARLES E. TURNER,

AUTHOR OF "CUPID—POLITICAL AGENT," "LOVE INTERVENES," &c

[All Rights Reserved]

"**B**A JOY! It's like coming to life again to be listening once more to an opera. Ten years in the bush give one a power of appreciation which indifferent singing cannot destroy."

Hullo! What's the applause for? The prima donna, I believe. Yes—Miss L. 'Rindal. Gad! I believe I know that piece."

So ran the thoughts of the big bronzed

tuted under the India Councils Act of 1909. He replied that he had had no opportunity of personally observing them at work. But what he had read and heard made him feel that they were on the whole a great success. He went on to say that he was profoundly impressed with the calibre of the many Indians with whom he had come in contact. They were distinguishing themselves in many lines of activity—administrative, political, industrial and commercial. He believed that Indian industries were capable of great expansion and that Indians were destined to play a great part in developing them.

I called Lord Ronaldshay's attention to a statement that was appearing in Indian papers to the effect that he believed that Indians did not respect the sanctity of truth. He hotly repudiated the suggestion that he ever accused Indians of this. He was aware of the passage in his writings to which reference was made, and as usual it was an isolated phrase cut away from its context. He said that if it was read in conjunction with what preceded it, any fair-minded person would realize that he was referring solely to the difficulties of travel in *uncivilized Asia*—the difficulties that he had experienced with his muleteers etc., when travelling in Central Asia. Their

habit of promising to bring ponies on a certain day and then not doing so for perhaps two or three days afterwards and so on. I asked Lord Ronaldshay if he could show me the passage which he did. The sentence to which objection was taken read

Finally East and West As a like we with one another a proclaiming the existence of that strange and mysterious law by which it appears to have been decreed that among the peoples of the West alone shall the sanctity of Truth meet with respect or recognition. *A Wandering Student in the Far East* Vol. I p. 11.

Thereupon I told his Lordship that I for one did not wonder that complaint was made for he spoke of 'East and West Asia alike.' I said that the statement was much too broad—and thus he could not deny I gathered that ten years later he has seen the wisdom of qualifying his statements and using words that express precisely what he means.

My final question to Lord Ronaldshay was 'May I say in my report of these interviews that you have great belief in India's potentiality and in the capacity of Indians and look forward to helping India's evolution?'

The Governor designate of Bengal smiled and said 'Yes.'

KRISHNAKANTA'S WILL

By BANNIM CHANDRA CHATTERJEE

(All Rights Reserved)

CHAPTER XVI

Without losing a moment Gobindal plunged in, swam, dived down and brought her up to the surface. He then bore her out of the water and placed her on the landing. Outwardly she showed no signs of life for she was quite unconscious and there was a full suspension of her breath.

With the assistance of the man how ever who had the care of the garden Gobindal removed her to a room in the house and laid her on a couch. Her eyes were closed, the wet clinging to her hair much darker hue to the hair, her above. Her fair gentle brow which

now showed no signs of shame or fear, bespoke yet as it seemed some sorrow in her heart. This evening as she lay stretched on the couch before him the light shining fitfully upon her she looked so bewitching, fascinating, in Gobindal's eye that he loved her. The beautiful and delicate crest of her face, the round supple limbs soaked in water, the long dishevelled hair hanging down in clusters at the bed's head from which water was dripping—these made a deep impression on Gobindal's mind. He felt such pity for her that he could hardly keep the tears out of his eyes. 'O God,' said he, 'why didst Thou give her beauty if

"Thou wouldst make her unhappy!" His heart wrung to think that he was the unfortunate cause of this sad catastrophe.

"If there be life in her I will save her," said Gobindalal. He knew what to do in such cases as this. He raised her now to a sitting, now to a standing, posture; turned her this way and that and on every side, and continued this operation until she had thrown up nearly the whole of the quantity of water she had swallowed. This, however, did not induce respiration. But though this seemed a very difficult thing to accomplish Gobindalal was acquainted with the process, and he at once proceeded to try it. He told the gardener, who was a Urah, to blow into her mouth while he slowly moved her arms up and down. The fellow was afraid. A cold sweat seemed to break upon him. If his master had told him to go before a tiger he might not have refused to do his bidding; but now he totally refused to obey him. It was, as it seemed to him, a preposterous order—a thing contrary to nature or reason, and he said, "I can't do it, master, I am sure I can't."

"Then you move her arms up and down, and I will do the blowing," said Gobindalal. And he showed him how the arms should be raised slowly and brought slowly down again while he blew into her mouth. Gobindalal put his mouth to hers to blow. A thrill ran through his frame. But he was awake to nothing—nothing but his sacred duty—the duty to try his utmost to save her life. The operation of moving her arms up and down, and blowing continued for nearly two hours, at the end of which Rohini breathed. She belonged to the world again.

CHAPTER XVII.

Rohini now breathed freely. By slow degrees her consciousness returned. Gobindalal made her take some stimulant which seemed to increase the activity of the vital functions. She opened her eyes. There was nothing strange or unusual in her look; and she seemed exceedingly happy in his company. A candle burnt on a teapoy in one corner of the room. She had got back her memory. "I drowned myself. Why have you saved my life?" she said.

"God be thanked that you have got back your life," said Gobindalal.

"Why have you saved my life?" she

said again. "What enmity is there between you and me that you should stand in the way of my dying? Why should I live to suffer if it could be helped?"

"No one has a right, Rohini, to kill oneself. It is a great sin."

"I do not know what act is sinful and what is not," said Rohini. "No one ever taught me. I doubt there are such things as virtue and vice; or why should I suffer without committing any very great sin in my life? This time you have saved my life, but in future I will take care to keep out of your way."

"Why should you die?" he said bitterly.

"Is it not better," said she, "to die at once than to die every day, every hour and every minute in my life?"

"What is your grief, Rohini?"

"Oh, I am dying of thirst. There is a spring of cool water before me, yet I am to hold off."

"Drop it, Rohini. Hush! It is getting on for eleven and you must go home. I will go with you if you will let me."

"No, thank you, I can go alone."

Gobindalal said nothing, for he saw what her objection was.

When she had gone Gobindalal felt he was no longer his own master. He was deeply in love with Rohini. His was a guilty passion, his conscience told him. Much as he wished to play the man and crush and trample it under foot he felt he was too weak. He sought help from on high to enable him to do so. But he had not the least restraint on his passion, and in his helplessness he threw himself on a bed and wept like a child.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"What made you stay away in the garden till such a late hour of night?" his wife asked when Gobindalal returned home.

"Why do you ask?" he said. "Did I never stay away so late as this before?"

"You did, but I fear something has happened tonight," said Bhramar.

"How do you know?" said her husband.

"Why," said she, "your very look and the tone of your voice seem to indicate it."

"What has happened?" said Gobindalal rather coolly.

"How am I to know? I was not there with you."

"No, but you can find out

matter by looking at my face. Can't you do that dear?

Come I don't like your jokes she said. 'Something is the matter with you. There is something wrong for I can see it perfectly well by your looks. Tell me what is the matter, do you ought to have no secrets from me.'

When Bhramar had finished speaking her feelings were worked up to such a pitch that she burst into tears.

Gobindlal drew her affectionately to his side wiped the tears from her eyes and said 'I will tell you Bhramar but not now.'

Why not now? she said.

It is better you never know it he said.

It is not for the ear of a girl so young as you. But I may tell you some day next week.

Be it as you please. I think I can wait for a few days.

No not so soon. Bhramar he said again. Let a couple of years pass and then I will tell you.

She sighed. Since you will not tell me she said. I will not urge you. Oh I am so unhappy. But I hoped you would tell me.

She was sad. Like a cloud overspreading the clear azure sky in spring a gloom was suddenly cast over her mind and she did not know why. She thought she had grown very naughty that her husband was very kind to her and that it was very uncharitable on her part to have any suspicions about his actions. She went and took a book out of the shelf to read thinking it would take this foolish unmeaning gloom off her mind and make her cheer up. But she could not give attention. So she threw aside the book and went and laid herself down on the bed.

CHAPTER VII

Next day when Krishnakanta had retired after meal to take his usual rest Gobindlal entered his chamber and unlike his way talked with him chiefly over matters relating to the estate. He inquired about the condition of each estate that had been jointly acquired by himself and his late father and asked a lot of questions that incidentally suggested themselves to him and Krishnakanta was very pleased at this unexpected inquisitiveness on the part of his nephew for whom he had a great affection. You must

learn' said he 'to look after your own affairs. I have become old and am not expected to live long. If you neglect to look to your own affairs while you can after my death everything will be at sixes and sevens. I am not now able to visit the estates myself so for want of supervision there is disorder in them.'

I shall be glad to visit them uncle if you want me to' said Gobindlal. Indeed I would like to visit all the estates myself.

Krishnakanta was very pleased to hear his words. I am happy to hear said he, that you wish to visit the estates. At present there is considerable mismanagement at Bunderkhal. The *naib* there says that the tenants are on strike and have stopped paying their rent. But the tenants complain that the *naib* does not give them proper receipts for rent paid by them. So I think you will do well to start at once for Bunderkhal.

Gobindlal readily agreed to his uncle's proposal and left his chamber to make preparations for his departure. He had wished to obtain his permission to go on a visit to one of the estates and he had gone to him for that purpose. Though a hard some youth of good morals he was as young people at his age generally are subject to the influence of beauty. He wanted to go abroad because he felt that if he stayed at home it would be very difficult for him to put Rohini out of his mind and forget her. His object was to run away from her and try to forget her where she would never come in his way. Out of sight is out of mind he thought of that. And he thought of his wife's affection for him. How devoted she was to her husband. If she knew that he loved Rohini it would kill her surely. He thought he would sooner die than be unfaithful to his wife.

When his wife knew that he was going on a visit to one of the estates where his presence was urgently required she wanted to go with him. She pressed very much. But her mother-in-law strongly opposed and consequently she had to be left behind.

Bunderkhal was about ten days' voyage from their village. The boat to carry Gobindlal was furnished with everything needed to make such a long journey by water. He took leave of his weeping wife. He kissed her and comforted her. With a favourable wind he set sail accompanied by his own cool and servants.

When her husband was gone Bhramar wept bitterly for sometime, lying down on the bare floor. Afterwards she rose, and in a fit of vexation tore up the leaves of the book she had taken out of the shelf to read. She did not stop there. She broke all the china in her room; she cut the flowers in the pots, let fly away the birds whose cages she could get at, and did more other mischief she could think of. She then lay down on the bed, hiding her face in the coverlet to indulge in her grief. Meanwhile Gobiindalal was on the way to his destination, the boat under sail taking him farther and farther away from those he had left behind.

CHAPTER XX.

Bhramar missed her husband very much. After he was gone she could find pleasure in nothing. She told her maid not to get flowers any more, her excuse being they were 'full of grubs.' A game of cards had no interest for her now. As for embroidery, it was trying to her eyes. She told so to the girls to whom she gave away her pattern books, and her gold and silver threads and needles. She cared not what she ate or what she wore, and her hair seemed not to have known the comb since her husband went away. At meal-time she often complained she had no inclination for food. Her mother-in-law sent for the physician who prescribed an appetising medicine. But she never took it; she threw it out of the window the instant it was brought to her by her maid.

Things went on in this way till at length her maid's patience was tired. "I mean no offence, madam," said Khiroda, "but of what avail is all this weeping and chafing and fretting? What good is it to refuse food and drink or go without a wink of sleep at night? Master is a very different man from what he used to be. He cares not now to think of you though you be killed with thinking of him. Shall I say it? He loves Rohini."

No sooner had she uttered her last words than she got a smart slap on her cheek.

"Get out of the room, I say; how dare you talk like this?" cried Bhramar, provoked almost into crying.

"Why, your beating me will not stop people's mouths," she said. "The talk in the neighbourhood is that master is in love with Rohini. She was seen coming

home from the garden at a very late hour of the night the other day."

It would have been well if the maid had kept quiet. Bhramar was provoked beyond all bearing. She gave her slaps upon slaps, blows upon blows, pulled her by the hair, and pushed her and pinched her. Finally in a fit of passion she burst into tears.

Khiroda was used to hard words and to hard blows besides, and she seldom or never took any offence. But this day as her mistress went beyond the proper limit she was a little annoyed.

"It is useless to beat me, mistress," she began again. "I don't mean any offence, not at all. I wish nothing had happened; and nothing is farther from my heart than to wound your feelings. But the thing is we don't like people should make a fuss about it. You mightn't believe me, but you can inquire about the truth of what I say if you care to."

Bhramar was impatient at her words. "How do you dare to speak this nonsense about my husband?" she exclaimed, half choked with grief and anger. "Am I such a goose as to believe it or inquire about the truth of it? I would sooner believe anything than to give ear to the words of any idle gossip in the village. Oh, I cannot tolerate this from a servant. If you utter another word I will break your silly pate. Get out of my sight!"

It was rather late in the morning when Khiroda, after she had been liberally treated to slaps and fisticuffs, flounced out of the room in anger. When she had gone Bhramar, with uplifted face and tears in her eyes, called upon her husband, saying, "O my lord of my life, my teacher, my guide, could it be that it was this that you refused that night to tell me when I insisted on knowing? Is it possible you love Rohini?"

She had unbounded faith in her husband. She believed that his character was stainless; and the more she dwelt upon it the more convinced she was that sin and he were leagues apart.

CHAPTER XXI.

Khiroda had no grudge against his mistress, though it must be said that like most women she found pleasure in talking of the private concerns of others. She certainly meant no harm, but she was

sorry that her words were not believed and by such a green horn as she thought her mistress was and she resolved to make her feel that she had told no falsehood to her.

I will not bear being beaten and abused for nothing said Khiroda, meeting Haramoni on the road. Khiroda was going to the Baruni tank to bathe and Haramoni a cook belonging to Krishnakanta's house was returning home after hithing.

What has turned up? asked Haramoni stopping.

'I wish to ask you one thing said Khiroda. If anybody does anything bad or condemnable isn't it more than to expect that people will keep quiet about it?'

'Why of course said Haramoni. But what's the matter?'

Mistress beat me this morning for daring to tell her that master is in love with Rohini.'

'In love with Rohini! Is it true?'

'True? Is true as you and I stand talking together. Why did master come home so late as one o'clock the other night? He was in the garden with Rohini.'

Poor unfortunate girl said Haramoni. 'I feared she would trip. I did for there was something I could see that made me apprehend some such thing about her. I never liked her. I never did indeed.'

And Haramoni pitied Rohini again. She used many more epithets, smiled scornfully and then turned to pursue her way leaving Khiroda to pursue her own.

That morning on her way to the tank the maid servant circulated her story among half a dozen more women whom she happened to meet on the road. Haramoni was not indifferent either but did her best to promote the circulation of it by telling it to every one of her friends. The story, as such stories are bound to be, was a great deal exaggerated as it passed from mouth to mouth. Some said that Gobul Lal was over head and ears in love with Rohini. Others declared that he had given her seven thousand rupees worth of ornaments. In a day or two this formed a principal topic in all parts of the village and created a sensation in it.

Soon afterwards when Bhramar keenly felt her separation from her husband there came to her neighbours who wished to condole with her in her misfortune. First

went Binodini. Is it true? she asked. What is true? said Bhramar. Binodini shot a sly glance at her. The rumour I mean—the rumour about Rohini she said.

Bhramar felt very angry but not wishing to say anything and wanting to get rid of her drew her child into her arms apparently to caress it but really to make it cry which she did by secretly giving it a pinch. Binodini without any more ado took her child from her and withdrew trying to quiet it by giving it suck.

Next went Surodhuni a young lady of two and twenty who often used to call to have a game of cards with Bhramar. She assured her she was very sorry on her account considering that her husband was the handsomest young man in the village.

Why don't you try and get something she said to use as a charm against such an evil as this? You ought to consult somebody who can help you about it for what men care for in women is beauty, and you know you cannot boast of it. But I wonder at Rohini. What a wicked brazen faced girl she is!

Bhramar pretended not to understand her and said I do not quite see what you are driving at. What has Rohini done?

Oh dear! you don't know the news when the whole village rings with it? Why your husband has lost his head about Rohini. The rumour is that he has given seven thousand rupees worth of ornaments to her.

Bhramar was in liquor. But she dared not say anything to her and vented her anger instead on a little stray doll of clay whose head she snapped as though it were the head of Surodhuni. However calling up a smile she said I have looked into the account book you also have fourteen thousand rupees worth of ornaments in your name.

Afterwards there went many others young ladies and elderly ladies and ladies in short of all ages who either singly or with friends all as they pretended to comfort Bhramar. Alluding to the love affair they pitied her. They declared that though there was no reason to wonder as both Rohini and her husband were young and handsome it was undoubtedly very unfortunate that such a thing should ever have happened to destroy her happiness and peace of mind for ever. They all pretended they were very sorry and some even

shed tears; and Bhramar, far from finding any comfort from such lip sympathy as they showed, felt a great deal more miserable than she had ever done before. Their visits were simply an infliction, and their seemingly kind speech was gall and wormwood to her.

She was very very miserable. Not long before this she had been as gay and happy as a lark. The women of the village had envied her lot because she was the wife of the richest and handsomest young man for many miles round; because her husband bore an excellent character, and because,

though in point of beauty she was nothing by his side, he loved her dearly. Now when they knew that her husband's affection had been suddenly alienated from her they laughed in their sleeve and enjoyed her trouble very much.

When she was alone she vented the anguish of her heart in bitter tears. Could she ever doubt her own dear husband? Yet why was this rumour? It seemed such a mystery that she wished he could come at once and solve it for her.

(To be continued)

TRANSLATED BY D. C. ROY.

SOCIAL SERVICE *

SOcial Service is a pretty vast subject and can be regarded from many points of view. A historical survey of the growth and development of Social Service in this country, through various social conditions in different ages, would be almost as fascinating as a comparative study of its progress and activity in different countries at the present day; no less interesting would be a study of the determining factors in the social and political conditions, through the action and reaction of which, social work has been variously shaped and moulded; and equally illuminating would be a review of the contributions made to the cause of Social Service, as it has been understood at different times, by various philanthropists and social reformers and by numerous movements and organisations.

Apart from these and other academic and philosophical surveys of this subject such as its relation to religion and various social problems, we could derive more practical benefit from a detailed study of the various forms in which Social Service could be rendered in towns and villages and of the work and methods of the many present-day movements and institutions which are doing this work each in its own particular way. It might perhaps be

better if we could take up each of the items in a programme of Social Service, e.g., co-operative work, mass education, village sanitation, work among the depressed classes, &c., and give full and practical consideration to each of them, in relation to our present-day environments and needs.

There is yet another most essential and intensely interesting aspect of Social Service, viz., a proper and systematic study of social conditions. This social study, I am afraid, is not receiving that amount of care and attention which it deserves, owing perhaps to pressure of actual service.

All these and various other social problems connected with this subject may well form a most interesting and instructive series of lectures from this platform of popular education. We may also include social exhibits and lantern shows which more than anything else graphically represent various social facts and conditions and make lasting impressions on the popular mind and stimulate our social conscience. I have decided, however, to make a few broad observations on Social Service generally.

I shall try briefly to deal with the subject as follows:

A. What is Social Service—its definition and its organic evolution in this country;

B. What is its present need; and

C. What should be our duty towards it.

The meaning of Social Service—a

* Being an address delivered by Dr. D. N. Mastr, of the Bengal Social Service League, in connection with the Ram Mohan Library Saturday Evening Lectures on 24th February, 1917.

the precious days and spend them in good works and prayer. But that is not my nature and my only regret is that I can not take in the whole of the beautiful days and nights that are passing through my life with all their colour, their light and shade, their silent prayer filling the skies, their peace and beauty pervading all space between earth and heaven.

What a grand festival what a vast theatre of festivity. And we cannot even fully respond to it so far away do we live from the world. The light of the stars travels millions of miles to reach the earth but it cannot reach our hearts — so many millions of miles further are we!

Ah that heavenly sunset which I saw on the Red Sea on my way to England where is it now? But what splendid good fortune it was for me to have seen it. The vision which of all poets in the world I alone saw did not come in vain for its colours have burnt themselves into my life. Each such day is as so much hoarded wealth.

Such are some of the days of my childhood at the river side garden some of my nights on the roof terrace some rainy days on the south and west verandas some evenings of my youth at the Chandernagore villa a sunset and a moonrise seen from the Sanchal peak at Darjeeling these and other scraps of time I have kept filed away within me. When in my early life I used to lie on the roof terrace on moonlit nights the moonlight would brim over like foam from a glass of wine and intoxicate me.

The world into which I have tumbled is peopled with strange beings. They are always busy erecting walls and rules round themselves and how careful are they with

their curtains lest they should see! It is a wonder to me they have not made drab covers for flowering plants and put up a canopy to ward off the moon. If the next life is determined by the desires of this one then I should be reborn from this enshrouded planet into some free and open realm of joy.

Only those who cannot steep themselves in beauty to the full despise it as an object of the senses. But they who have tasted of its inexpressibility know how far it is beyond the highest powers of mere eye or ear — nay even the heart is powerless to attain the end of its yearning.

I masquerade through life as a civilised creature when in passing and repassing the streets of the town I converse with the most polished of civilised humanity in the most civilised manner. But at heart I am a barbarian and a savage. Is there no state of anarchy for me where mad men hold joyful revelry?

But what am I doing? I am raving like the hero of a melodrama who rants in a long aside against the conventions of society to show his superiority to the rest of mankind. I really ought to be ashamed to say this kind of thing. The bit of truth in it has long ago been drowned in verbiage. People in this world talk a deal too much and I am the worst offender. This has just struck me after all this while.

P.S. I have left out the very thing I started to tell of. Don't be afraid it won't take four more sheets. It is this that on the evening of the first day of Asarah it came on to rain very heavily in great lance like showers. That is all.

Translated by
SURENDRANATH TAGORE

KRISHNAKANTA S WILK

DR BANIM CHANDRA CHATTERJEE

(All rights reserved)

CHAPTER XXII

THE rumour was afloat that Gobin Lalal had given seven thousand rupees worth of ornaments to Kohini. This

had reached her ears and she who had spread this falsehood — it is Bhramar? She at once the conclusion it was she. Who but

foolish girl would ever care to circulate this nonsense? Surely it was she who did it to be revenged on her by branding her with infamy. She remembered to have heard that she had called her a thief. She said she would never forgive her, but wear it in her heart till she had humbled her pride.

The reader by now knows Rohini well enough to feel that she is up to anything. She went and borrowed from a neighbour a silk cloth wrought with beautiful designs in gold and silver, and a suit of gilt ornaments. With the cloth and the ornaments made up into a bundle she left and bent her steps in the direction of Krishnakanta's house. It was near dark, and she entered the house by the back door. She then went and stepped quietly into Gobindalal's room where Bhramar was alone and weeping. Seeing Rohini she recoiled just as she would have recoiled at the sight of a serpent in her way. "You thieving, wicked, dangerous woman, what do you want here in my room?" she cried. "Have you come into this house again to steal?"

Rohini cursed her in her mind. Aloud she said, and with a coolness which was extremely provoking, "No, not to steal. I don't need to steal now. I must confess that your husband is very kind to me. He has given me this valuable cloth, and these ornaments here whose worth is about three thousand rupees. The rumour that he has given me some seven thousand rupees' worth of ornaments is false."

"Get out of my room, you serpent. How dare you add insult to injury?" exclaimed Bhramar.

Rohini, without paying any heed to her words, hastened to put before her the ornaments after undoing the bundle.

This was so aggravating and insulting to her that she struck them with her foot in great indignation, and scattered them about on the floor. "Out, you shameless impudent woman, pack out this instant," she cried.

Rohini very quickly picked up the ornaments, put them together and withdrew without uttering another word.

CHAPTER XXIII

Bhramar could get no sleep at all, and she passed a very anxious and restless night. Before morning dawned she engaged herself in writing a letter to her

husband. When she was married she was an unfledged and unlettered girl of eight. Her husband taught her how to read and write, but she was never an apt pupil, and consequently she had not been able to make any very great progress. However, she could read and write tolerably well. This day as she wrote she blotted and blundered much, for she felt very uneasy in her mind.

Her letter we give below in a readable form.

"That day when you returned from the garden after eleven o'clock at night, I inquired what made you stay away till so late as that. You refused to tell me. When I insisted on knowing you said you would tell me, but not until a couple of years had passed. But I have got your secret. I wish I had never known it. Rohini called yesterday to show me the cloth and the ornaments you have given her. Such a wicked impudent woman she is. She did it to hurt and insult me, I know. But I bore with her and let her go unharmed."

"What will you say now? I had unbounded faith in you. You know I had. My heart is broken. I wish we should not meet when you come. Would you kindly drop a line to say when you are going to come home? I request this favour because I want to go to my father's house before your return home. I shall know how to get your uncle to consent to my going."

In due course Gobindalal received his wife's letter. When he had read it, he was as much pained as surprised. It was like a bolt from the blue. The language in which it was couched made him for a moment doubt that it was written by his wife. But there could be no question about it, for he well knew her hand.

By the same post there had come a few more letters which he afterwards opened and read one after the other. Among these was one from Brahmananda, who wrote as follows—

My Dear Sir,

I am obliged to communicate with you on a very painful subject. A rumour is afloat (though I do not believe one word of it) that you are in a criminal intrigue with my niece, Rohini, and that you have given seven thousand rupees' worth of ornaments to her. This is scandalous, and injurious to us. But who do you?"

the inventor of it is? Would you believe me? They name your wife I was astonished to hear it, for I never dreamed of any harm from your quarter. I am a poor man and have ever lived under the protection of your uncle. I communicate my grievance to you, and I earnestly hope that you will do justice in the matter.

Yours sincerely

Brahmananda Ghose

Gobindalal was amazed. Bhramar had fabricated this? Was it possible? The more he pondered over it the more perplexed he was. At length he decided that he must at once start for home. So he told his *naiab*, and through him his tenantry that he was going home the next day, the pretext put forward being that the climate of the place did not agree with his health. Accordingly a boat was got ready, and on the following day Gobindalal started homeward with his attendants.

CHAPTER XXIV

Why had she thought Bhramar, let her husband go? If he had stayed at home the mystery of this disgraceful rumour would have been easily solved and she would have been spared the cruel anxiety she was labouring under. She was in a passion with her husband for the proofs she had of his illicit love for Rohini seemed to speak very strongly against him. This troubled her very much making her miserable and taking the sweetness out of her daily bread.

On the very day that Gobindalal left to return home the *naiab* sent by post an intimation of his departure to Krishnakanta. The letter reached him four or five days before Gobindalal arrived. When Bhramar heard that her husband was coming home she wrote a letter to her mother, which she secretly sent by a woman of a low caste, for her native village was only a few miles off from Haridra gram. She pretended she was in the worst of health and asked her mother to send for her immediately on receipt of her letter. She warned her at the same time that in the letter they would write they were to make no mention of the state of her health.

When her mother received her letter, she naturally became very anxious. Had it been any other person he might have suspected that there was something wrong. But the mother easily swallowed

what her daughter wrote. She wept and showed the letter to her husband, who at her instance sent a palanquin and bearers the next day with a letter in which he made a pretext of his wife's illness to request Krishnakanta to send their daughter to their house for a few days.

Krishnakanta was in a fix. It did not seem to him right to allow his daughter in law to go to her father's house, since Gobindalal was coming home and would arrive shortly. Nevertheless he ought not, he thought, to refuse to let her go, considering that her mother was ill and wished to see her. He reflected for a while and decided that she might go only for four days.

On his return home Gobindalal heard that his wife had gone to her father's hut that a palanquin and bearers should be sent that day to bring her. He was greatly annoyed. Did she not know him better than to believe a flying rumour and conclude that he was in the guilt? If she did not care to have the slightest regard for his feelings why should he have any for hers? She was certainly going to extremes. She would be sorry for it one day! He expressly told his mother not to bring her, and Krishnakanta said nothing but allowed his nephew to have his own will.

CHAPTER XXV

After Gobindalal's return home some days had passed, and Bhramar came not, for no one went for her. Gobindalal thought that she was going farther than she had a right to, that her attitude was defiant and that he must teach her a lesson. Nevertheless he felt a pang whenever he looked around the vacant room. How very strange it seemed to him that there could be any misunderstanding between himself and his wife. The very thought of it would bring tears into his eyes. However painful the separation from her was at times he would feel very angry when he thought that her behaviour was most unbecoming. Why did she not tell her suspicions to him? Sometimes he allowed himself to be so carried away by his passion that he thought he would never see her face again.

Days went by and Gobindalal felt so sad and lonely that at length he resolved to get over his trouble by giving himself up to the thought of Rohini. He had tried to forget Rohini while he had been away, but

in vain. Off and on her pensive face (for so it appeared to him) would come floating before his mind in spite of him, chasing away all his virtuous thoughts. Now he wanted to welcome the thought of Rohini as a means whereby to drown his sorrow. But he little thought that in doing so he would be taking a most dangerous course—a deadly poison in order to be rid of a little ailment which could be cured by a simple remedy.

Gobindalal was enamoured of Rohini and now he gave the reins to his passion and he continued until his heart fluttered for her as it had never done.

One wet evening Gobindalal was seated in a bower near the garden house where he commanded a full view of the tank. It was the rainy season. He was thinking of Rohini and he looked sad and thoughtful. The rain was falling and the gloom of evening was enhanced by the thick black clouds which overspread the sky. Through the growing darkness and the rain Gobindalal could see a woman descending the stairs of the ghat at no very great distance from where he sat. He called out to warn her that the stairs were slippery in the rain and that she should be very careful lest she might catch a fall.

The wind whistled among the trees and the rain pattered. Whether the woman had heard him properly we cannot tell but she set down her pot at the ghat, mounted the stairs again and walked to ward the garden. Coming to the garden door she pushed it open and entered closing it behind her. Then slowly she moved up to where Gobindalal sat.

'Rohini' cried Gobindalal in agreeable surprise, marking his tone. 'Why have you come out in the rain, Rohini?'

'Did you call me, sir?' said Rohini. 'I thought you called me.'

'No,' said he, 'but I called out to say that the stairs were slippery. One might catch a fall stepping carelessly you know. But why do you stand in the rain?'

She found courage and stepped into the bower.

'Oh, what will a person think if he should see us alone together and in such a solitary place? You expose yourself to scandal.'

'I do not care,' said Rohini. 'Have you not heard the rumour?'

'I have,' he said. 'But is it true that it was invented and spread by Bhramar?'

'I will tell you. But shall we be talking here?'

'No, come with me,' said Gobindalal. They walked a few paces and entered the garden house. Modesty will not permit us to give the full story together. Suffice it to say that when Rohini left this evening she was satisfied that she had obtained a pretty fast hold upon Gobindalal's mind.

CHAPTER XXVI

We love and admire everything beautiful in nature. You admire the wings of a butterfly. I am delighted when I see a rainbow in the sky. You love flowers because they please you. Why should I not love a pretty young girl if she pleases me? It is no sin to love and to love is natural.

Thus reasoned Gobindalal in his mind. Thus even will a saint reason on the first step to ruin. Gobindalal was so fascinated by Rohini's beauty that he thought it was no sin to wish to get her. His passion for her consumed him night and day like a flame. Sigh after sigh broke from him and he seemed to have no wish, no thought, no hope beyond her. This went on for a time till one day in an evil hour he slipped and so did himself to the devil.

Krishnakanta knew nothing of his going wrong but after a time it got to his ears. When he heard it he was much grieved for he dearly loved his nephew. This must not be overlooked, he thought, and it seemed to him that a timely admonition might make him turn and repent. But he had been ill for some days past and consequently was not able to leave his chamber. Gobindalal went every day to see his uncle but as the servants were always by Krishnakanta did not like to say anything to his nephew in their presence. But the old man's illness increased. He went from bad to worse and he thought that if he did not speak to his nephew yet he might never have an opportunity for he felt that he was not long for the world. One day being on a visit after he had returned very late at night from the garden Gobindalal said, 'How do you feel to night, uncle?' Krishnakanta said nothing. He signed to the servants to leave the room. 'What made you stay away so late this?' he said. Gobindalal made as if he did not hear him and only coughed as he took his hand to feel the

pulse. He startled, for it seemed to him that his pulse beat was so faint as to be scarcely perceptible. He abruptly left the room, saying only that he would be back in a little time.

Without losing a minute Gobindalal hastened to the physician. "Oh, come quick, sir," said he as soon as he saw him, "uncle seems so very bad just now, and I am so afraid." The physician, who had noticed no premonitory symptoms to fear anything of the kind, looked rather amazed. However, he made haste to take a few pills and walked off with Gobindalal with hurried steps. On reaching the house they quickly went and entered Krishnakanta's room. The old man looked rather alarmed. When the physician had felt his pulse, he asked him if he feared anything worse.

"I cannot assure you, sir, that there is no reason for apprehending anything of the kind," said the physician in a serious tone of voice.

Krishnakanta understood the drift of his words. "Do you think my end is near?" he asked again.

"I do not know. I mean to wait and see what effect this medicine has on you, and then I may be able to give my opinion," he returned, offering him a pill which he wished him to swallow in a little water. But Krishnakanta instead of taking the pill dropped it into the spit box at his side.

The physician looked up with some surprise.

"You need not mind my not wishing to take any medicine," said Krishnakanta. "It won't—it can't do any good to an old man like me whose last hour is at hand. I would rather wish all of you to chant the praise of God as the only remedy that can do any real good to me now."

There was an awful silence in the room. No one spoke a word, nor stirred hand or foot. Krishnakanta alone sang a hymn, one he loved to sing and his face betrayed no signs of fear. After a

while he said to Gobindalal, "Open the drawer and take out my will. The key is there."

Gobindalal took out the key from underneath the pillow where it used to be kept, opened the drawer, and taking out the will handed it to his uncle.

"Call my clerks here and all the respectable men of the village," said he to Gobindalal.

In a little time the room was crowded, and Krishnakanta told one of his clerks to read out the will. When he had finished he declared that he wished to change the will, and ordered the clerk to write a fresh one.

"A fresh will?" said he, looking up to his master's face.

"I do not mean any changes in the wording of the will," said Krishnakanta. "Only—Here he paused, and the clerk looked inquiringly at him."

"Only," he continued, "you are to leave out Gobindalal's name, and in its stead to put his wife's. Write also that after her death her half share of the estate will go to her husband."

All were silent, and no one dared to speak a word. The clerk looked significantly at Gobindalal, who by a motion of his head told him to write as he was bid.

When the writing was finished, Krishnakanta signed the will and asked the witnesses to put their signatures to it. After which he took up the will again and signed as one of the witnesses.

In the will Gobindalal had not a farthing. To his wife was given his half share of the property.

That day toward the small hours of the morning Krishnakanta breathed his last, and even to his last moments the name of God dwelt upon his lips.

(To be continued)

Translated by D. C. Roy

its heart's content and express its feelings to its own satisfaction

This freedom of solitude is what my mind is fretting for day and night it

would be alone with its imaginings, as the Creator broods over His own creation

Translated by
SURENDRANATH TAGORE

KRISHNAKANTA'S WILL

By BANAKIMCHANDRA CHATTERJEE

(All rights reserved)

CHAPTER XXVII

KRISHNAKANTA'S death was lamented by young and old for although like most rich men he was proud of his wealth and power he was charitable kind and well meaning and always ready to help any one in trouble. So his death as might be expected produced a great sensation in the village. A great man had passed away said some. Others declared that the village had lost in him a friend and protector. There was one old man who in somewhat poetic language observed that in time of trouble he was their chief refuge while generally speaking he might be compared to the charitable banian whose thick foliage and long out spreading branches afford a cool shade to weary and sun smitten travellers on the way.

Krishnakanta's loss was greatly felt by his relations most of all by Bhramar. She was sent for by her mother in law a day or two after this sad event for she must not now be allowed to stay away at her father's. When she arrived she wept aloud for Krishnaakanta.

On any other occasion Bhramar would have resolved to have that unpleasant matter—the matter touching Rohini—out of her husband even though it might have been thought likely to lead to a scene but this was not the time and her heart was full of sorrow. On her arrival she was crying and she cried bitterly when she saw her husband. Gobindalal too shed tears plentifully for by his uncle's death the family sustained a heavy domestic loss.

Both Bhramar and Gobindalal concluded that before the matter could be settled they must wait until the customary period of mourning was over. Bhramar

said Gobindalal one day in tones of great regret I want to talk to you but we must wait a few days.

She felt as though she would cry. With an effort however she checked her emotion. Just as you please she only said.

That day passed. The sun rose and sank and rose and sank again and many times after that. But no one perceived that a change had come over Bhramar. No one knew that a cloud hung over her mind that a cankerworm had got into her to eat into her vitals. She was very different from what she used to be. On her face was missed that smile which was once her own. Yet she smiled and Gobindalal smiled. But where was the smile which belonged to them in the days past and which seemed to spring from the very core of their hearts? Where was the smile which at one time seemed to say they were very happy and could never be more happy? Then Bhramar was proud that she had a husband so handsome and so very kind and loving. Then Gobindalal was thankful and happy in the thought that he had a wife so devoted and so very good. But these feelings were replaced by a coolness to which they had been strangers before.

They were not what they used to be. There was something strange in their behaviour in all things. They talked little if at all and were often at a loss to know what to say though not long before they had a world of things to say and never tired of talking. There was now to be marked an absence of that love which was strikingly noticeable in all their actions before. Often from his gloom which was so trying to him Gobindalal loved to seek refuge in the comforting thought of the Poor Bhramar! she in her anguish

upon Death to take her, for she had no peace, no happiness in her

CHAPTER XXVIII

Krishnakanta's *sraddha** went off happily. It was performed in a grand style. Heaps of money were expended. Feasts were held for days together, and largesses were given to Brahmans in a bountiful manner. To poor people cloths were distributed, and lots of money were given away in alms. Those who were friends of Krishnakanta declared that not less than a lac of rupees was spent, some again, who were not very well disposed towards him, observed that the expenditure could not have exceeded twenty thousand rupees, even taking the most liberal view of it. The actual sum expended, however, was a little over fifty thousand.

For some days there was great bustle and excitement in the village. Haralal had come home, and being the eldest son of his father, according to the rule the *sraddha* ceremony was gone through by him.

After it was over Haralal wanted to look at the fresh will made by his late father. The will was read out in the presence of a few friends and relations. Although it seemed that Haralal had a design, there were so many witnesses to the will that it was useless for him to try to carry it out. So one day without any more ado he left the house and was gone.

"I bring you good news," said Gobindalal to his wife.

"What good news?" asked Bhramar. She looked up, wondering what was coming.

"You have had the half share of the property. It has been given you by will."

"No! You are the lord of it!"

"Properly speaking I have nothing to do with it," said Gobindalal.

"But what is mine is yours, and what is yours is mine, you cannot deny it," she said.

"It won't do for you to talk like this, Bhramar. There is a deal of difference between you and me nowadays."

"Oh, how could you say so!" she said.

"You pain my heart to talk like this."

"But the property is yours," he said.

"I will not live on your bounty. I will not be a burden on you, I say."

His words pained her extremely, but presently she felt a pride swelling in her heart. "What do you mean to do then?" she said, looking up to his face.

"I will earn my own bread," said Gobindalal.

"Earn your bread! What do you mean?"

"I mean I will work for my bread, and I do not mind going to any distant part of the world to earn it."

"But the property," said Bhramar, "was acquired by your father, and as you are his heir, not I, your uncle had no right to dispose of it in the way he had done. The will is illegal and cannot stand. I do not speak my own views on the subject, but this is the opinion of my father who asserted that the will was illegal."

"Why, do you mean to say that my uncle's procedure was illegal and wrong? I am sure he knew better. And since he has given the property to you, it is properly and legally yours, and I have no right whatsoever to it."

"Well, if you think so I am ready to make it over to you in writing," she said.

"And am I sneakingly to accept the gift at your hands?"

"Sneakingly! Oh, what is this you say! You know that I am but your servant."

"It is all very fine to say that, but words will not mend matters now, I tell you."

"Oh, what have I done! I was given in marriage to you when I was a little girl, and now I am seventeen. And all these years I have been with you, knowing nothing but you. Under your tender care I have grown and you have been ever so fond of me. What have I done that you are so hard upon me? Oh, tell me what I have done!"

"You know—you remember it well," said Gobindalal.

"Oh, I am very sorry I went to my father's. I went because I was angry with you—my own husband. But I am very sorry for it. I ask a thousand pardons. Will you not forgive me? Oh, I know nothing beyond you."

And Bhramar fell at her husband's feet and wept.

Gobindalal spoke not a word. There was his wife, a suppliant at his feet,

* A rite or ceremony in which balls of rice are offered to the dead man and a feast is given to fellow-castemen and others.

entreating him to take pity and forgive her, but he spoke not a word. He was thinking of Rohini. How beautiful and clever she was! And what was Bhramar by her side? What recommendation had she save that she was a good and gentle girl? But he did not mean to forsake her, he wanted only to live apart from her for a time. And Rohini—he could throw her over any moment when he had got tired of her.

'Oh, have pity on me,' entreated Bhramar, her eyes bathed in tears. 'Speak a kind word, oh, do O God!' and this was in store for me.'

Her appeal surely rose to heaven, but Gobindalal paid no heed to it.

'Oh, speak but one kind word,' she urged again. 'Will you not?'

'I want to leave you,' said Gobindalal deliberately, and steeling his heart against all pity.

She was stunned. She said no more. She rose from her lowly position, paused, moved up to the door. Going out she stumbled, fell down and swooned away.

CHAPTER XXIV

'What have I done that you want to leave me?' This question Bhramar never put to Gobindalal, but after the scene described in the preceding pages this was upon her mind night and day. Gobindalal too asked himself what her fault was. Bhramar was surely in the wrong, he thought, for she ought to have considered before she wrote such a sharp letter to him. We will, however, give the debate that he had with his conscience.

Gobindalal. Her fault is she was jealous. And isn't it quite as bad as anything?

~~Conscience.~~ Hadn't she a good reason to be jealous? You cannot deny your illicit connection with Rohini.

G. When she first had her suspicions I was quite innocent.

C. Yes, but in your mind you knew you were guilty. And since by your conduct you gave your wife reason to be jealous as much before as after committing yourself to evil, could she have been anything but jealous?

G. But it seems to me that had she not been jealous I should never have gone wrong. Do we not sometimes drive an honest man to go astray by giving him a bad name?

C. The fault then, in your opinion, lies not at the door of him who goes to the bad, but him who gives him a bad name. Nice argument this!

G. Nice or not nice, I am sure she ought never to have gone to her father's since she was told that I was coming home and was on the way. Besides I think she could never have found it in her heart to write such a stinging letter to me if she had had the least regard for my feelings.

C. If she knew that she had had good grounds for her suspicion she was perfectly justified in acting as she had done. Can a wife see her husband go wrong and not resent it?

G. But she knew nothing for certain, and she acted on a mere rumour, which she should not have done. She ought to have asked me.

C. And did you care to ask her?

G. I did not.

C. Then how could you hold her wrong for never telling her suspicions to you? But that's not it. I will tell you what it really is.

G. And that is?

C. It is just this. You took a fancy to Rohini, and so you wished in your mind to get her. But why did Krishna Kanta give your share of the property to your wife? Because, besides feeling sure she would soon want to make it over to you, he hoped that such a step might open your eyes to your folly and win you back from the path you are treading.

G. She does want to make it over to me, but I will not accept it, not I.

C. Why? The property is yours. It was acquired by your late father, and you are his heir.

G. But since my uncle, on his death bed, bestowed it upon her, it is no longer mine.

C. Your uncle had no right to bestow it upon your wife. He knew that very well, but he did so, thinking it might disenchanted you, as I have said, and make you turn from the path you are pursuing.

G. But I will not stoop to accept a gift from my wife. I had much rather starve than do so.

C. In other words you would sooner give up your wife and give up your property than lose Rohini. Well, then go your way. If you are resolved upon your run no one can help it.

CHAPTER XXX

Gobindalal's mother had heard of her son's irregularities. She had noticed his apathetic behaviour to his wife, but she cared not to try to set things to rights again. The fact was she had become jealous and ill-disposed towards her daughter-in-law for the reason of her son's share of the property being made over to her. She might have cared to do every thing for her had she been able to see that in disposing, as he had done, of Gobindalal's share of the property Krishnakanta had been actuated by nothing but an anxious earnestness to correct his nephew. She thought that henceforth she was to be dependent on her daughter-in-law, that she was to have no will of her own but to bend in all things to hers, which she could never bear. For this reason she resolutely made up her mind to pass the remaining days of her life in the holy place, Benares. On another occasion when she had expressed a desire to go and live there Gobindalal had opposed. Now when she spoke her mind to him he readily and gladly consented to take her up there.

On the very day that she had a talk with her son Bhramar went to her father's for a few days. When she expressed her wish to go on a visit to her parents her mother-in-law made no objection but willingly consented to her going. While his wife was away Gobindalal raised upwards of a lac of rupees by disposing of a few jewels of his own, and also by effecting, under the rose, the sale of a small estate, which he held in his own name. Afterwards having fixed an auspicious day for their departure he wrote to inform his wife of it, asking her to come at once. Bhramar made not a day's delay, but came directly on receipt of her husband's letter. On her arrival she entreated her mother-in-law with tears in her eyes not to leave her alone. She said she was but a raw and ignorant girl and knew nothing of house-keeping, and that if she went she should keenly feel her absence in all things. Her mother-in-law by way of comforting her said that after she was gone her daughter would take care of her and help her with her advice in all household affairs. 'Be sides' she added, 'you have now become the mistress of the house and you must not flinch from your duty however onerous it may at first seem to you. Come, dress

your tears, and don't make yourself miserable for nothing.' But Bhramar kept crying and would not be comforted.

Presently she rose and went to seek her husband. A vague fear that this might be their last meeting troubled her very much. Finding him, and falling at his feet, weeping, she said, 'You are going to accompany mother, tell me, oh, tell me, I pray, when I may expect you back.'

'That I cannot tell. But I have no very great mind to return,' he said.

She stifled a pang. She gulped down a sob that rose in her throat. 'What do I care?' she said to herself springing to her feet abruptly. 'I can take poison and be rid of my trouble for ever.'

The day on which they were to start soon came. The railway station where they were to take train was about two miles from their village. The auspicious hour for their departure was at hand, and the porters were busied in taking out the trunks and other baggage to carry them to the station. Such of the servants as were to accompany their mistress were ordered to keep ahead and walk with the porters. The women of the neighbourhood were assembled to see Gobindalal's mother depart, and they shed tears with her daughter because she was going to leave them and her home for ever. It was soon time to depart. She went and bowed down before their household god, and great was her emotion when, kissing her daughter and bidding her neighbours farewell she seated herself in the palanquin to be borne to the station, leaving Gobindalal to follow.

Meanwhile Gobindalal went to take leave of his wife. On entering her room he found her in tears. 'Bhramar,' said he, 'I am going to accompany mother.'

She quickly brushed away her tears. 'Mother is going to live permanently at Benares. And you—are you not going to return?' she said.

Gobindalal made no answer, he was rather surprised at the manner of her putting the question. His wife, receiving no answer, said again, 'You have often told me there is nothing like being truthful. Tell me truly when you will get back. I am sure you will not tell me a falsehood.'

'Well I don't like to hoax anyone,' he said. 'Truth to say, I have no mind to return.'

"Why have you no mind? Will you not tell me?"

"Since you ask me I must tell you that I hate to be a hanger on."

"Oh, how you pain me to talk like this!"

"Maybe I do. But did you ever care to think that you were taking an unadvised step when you went to your father's?"

"I didn't, and I repented for it afterwards. I fell at your feet and craved your pardon. Oh, is it such a great offence that it cannot be forgiven? Will you not forgive and forget? To forgive is divine, you said it yourself."

"Yes, but you are the possessor of the half share of the estate. I shouldn't wonder if you think that you are now free to do as you like."

"Oh, you wrong me to talk like this. But you do not know what I have been doing. Look at this paper, do."

Through her father's help Bhramar had made over the half share of the property to her husband, and the paper she now placed in his hand was a deed of conveyance duly executed and registered.

When Gohindalal had glanced over it he tore up the paper. "I will not accept a gift from you," he said.

"It is useless to destroy it," she said. "There is a copy of it at the Registrar's office, my father has told me."

"I don't care. I will not accept a pie at your hands, that's all. Now good bye."

"When do you come back?" she asked again.

"I don't know. I may not."

"Oh, how can you be so cruel?"

"I tell you seriously. I have no mind to return."

"Is there not One above?" she gasped forth in a piteous wailing tone.

"Spare now your sermon, please. It is getting late,—I must be off."

His words smote heavily on her heart. She felt as if some one had struck her a deadly blow. Tears started to her eyes, but by an uncommon effort she quickly mastered them and sent them back to the source from which they sprang. "Go," she said with agony in her eye, "and return not if that, as you say, be your intention. I am innocent, you know I am, and yet you want to forsake me. But remember there is a God! Remember you will have to repent one day! If you think you can find one who can love you as truly and

devotedly as I love you, you are greatly mistaken. But you will find your mistake one day, I am sure you will. Then you will seek me, and you will know the agony of remorse when you think what a grave wrong you have done me. Go, say you will not come again if you like. But if I have been ever faithful to you, as faithful in thought as in deed, I say you will seek me, you will come to me again, and you will call me by my name as fondly as you used to do, and weep bitter tears."

Here her feelings choked her. She could say no more. She fell on her knees, stooped to kiss his feet, then rose and left the room.

CHAPTER XXXI

At one time when she was very happy with her husband, Bhramar had lost a child, a boy, at her lying in, and now the reminiscence of that sad incident served to add fuel to the flame of her grief. She holted herself into her room and bewailed the loss of her child, throwing herself down on the bare floor. "O my child, my baby," she wailed, "where are you gone? Had you been alive could your father have ever thought of leaving me? For your sake he would have borne with me even if I had been a bad and quarrelsome woman. He would have overlooked for your sake a hundred faults in me. Come, my sweet one, oh, come and be the comforter of your poor unhappy mother. Oh, pity and return! Cannot one, who is dead, be restored to his sorrowing mother?"

With bended knees and joined palms she implored God why He could be so cruel to her. "Say Thou, O God, she continued, "what I have done to deserve this punishment. My child I have lost, my husband has left me! Oh, why could his heart be turned against me who loved him better than life itself! How happy we were, how well we loved each other. His love had turned our home into an Eden, and I thought myself the happiest of women in the world. Oh it is so hard!—so hard! To have won the greatest joy that life can give—and then to lose it all!"

It seemed to her that God was cruel, and she could do nothing but weep. So she wept and cried, and she prayed God to end her sorrows by putting an end to her existence.

Leaving his wife Gohindalal walked pensively to the outer house. He

sting of his conscience How happy he had been with her! The thought of it was enough to draw a tear from his eye. He could not but feel that he was doing her a great wrong. Her unselfish love, which was ever eloquent in her eyes—eloquent equally in everything she did or said, he remembered. He could feel that what he was going to leave he could nowhere have again. He thought he would go back to her and tell her that he would soon return and that he was ashamed of his unjust behaviour to her and was sorry. But he lacked the moral

courage to go back to her and say it. So he thought he must go now, for he was not going to leave her for good, and could come back whenever he liked. Thus thinking he mounted his horse which was just then brought in saddled, and was soon off. In a minute he dismissed all painful thoughts from his mind, and as he rode on he found himself thinking of Rohini whose beautiful face floated before his mind's eye.

End of Part I

(To be continued)

TRANSLATED BY D. C. ROY

THE LOST JEWELS

BY SIR RABINDRANATH TAGORE

My boat was moored beside an old bathing ghat of the river, almost in ruins. The sun had set.

On the roof of the boat the boatmen were at their evening prayer. Against the bright background of the Western sky their silent worship stood out like a picture. The waning light was reflected on the still surface of the river in every delicate shade of colour from gold to steel blue.

A huge house with broken windows, tumble-down verandahs and all the appearance of old age was in front of me. I sat alone on the steps of the ghat which were cracked by the far reaching roots of a banyan tree. A feeling of sadness began to come over me, when suddenly I was startled to hear a voice asking

"Sir, where have you come from?"

I looked up and saw a man who seemed half starved and out of fortune. His face had a disipated look such as is common among my countrymen who take up service away from home. His dirty coat of Assam silk was greasy and open at the front. He appeared to be just returning from his day's work and to be taking a walk by the side of the river at a time when he should have been taking his evening meal.

The new comer took his seat beside me on the steps. I said in answer to his question

"I come from Ranchi."

"What occupation?"

"I am a merchant."

"What sort?"

"A dealer in cocoons and timber."

"What name?"

After a moment's hesitation I gave a name but it was not my own.

Still the stranger's curiosity was not satisfied. Again he questioned me.

"What have you come here for?"

I replied

"For a change of air."

My cross-examiner seemed a little astonished. He said

"Well, sir, I have been enjoying the air of this place for nearly six years and with it I have taken a daily average of fifty grains of quinine, but I have not noticed that I have benefited much."

I replied

"Still you must acknowledge that, after Ranchi, I shall find the air of this place sufficient of a change."

"Yes indeed," said he. "More than you bargain for. But where will you stay here?"

Pointing to the tumble-down house above the ghat, I said

"There."

I think my friend had a suspicion that I had come in search of hidden treasure. However he did not pursue the subject.

post graduate college class also means a professor teaching some students. Rivalry between the two sets of professors and students is not nonsensical for it is a thing which has meaning and can be understood as in fact it is not unthinkable. It may of course be very foolish or naive to permit such rivalry. But the Post graduate Teaching Committee has allowed this meaningless and foolish thing to exist as between some mofussil colleges and the University. Does that thing which is entirely senseless (in the sense of meaningless and foolish) with a tad us of three miles become perfectly sensible and wise between institutions at a distance of three hundred miles from each other?

Nor does it seem axiomatic to us that rivalry between a university professor and his class and a college professor and his class must necessarily be unhealthy.

We have never urged any objections against applying a part of the fee fund of the University to further post graduate teaching. Our objection is against increasing the fees in order to obtain an additional surplus. Examination fees are levied for efficiently conducting examinations. If there be some surplus—and there is generally every probability of such a surplus because it is impossible to estimate beforehand the exact total amount of examination expenses and the exact total number of examinees and levy fees accordingly—it may certainly be applied to any good purpose. S M has set up an objection which we have never urged and has demolished this imaginary objection to his complete satisfaction. We should have liked to have his defence of the enhancement of the examination fees but he has not favoured us with any.

All M A S, M D S, Ph D S, B L S, D S C S, M A B L S &c, have actually benefited by post graduate teaching whereas undergraduate examinees may or may not. How would S M like a legislative enactment to levy a super tax on these products of the university to further post graduate teaching? But they are tough customers whereas the undergraduate examinees are weak lambs who can be easily fleeced.

Examination fees can be justly increased only if without such enhancement the examinations cannot be conducted with adequate efficiency, but for no other reason.

An analogy is not a conclusive argument. The soldier knows before enlistment that his duty would be implicit obedience and therefore after he has enlisted it is not for him to argue in the way that S M's imaginary soldier is supposed to do. Similarly when the examinee has paid the enhanced fee (supposing the enhancement is sanctioned by the Government of India) he would certainly not be so foolish as to ask the university not to spend the surplus in a particular beneficial way. But he or his advocate is certainly entitled to object to the enhancement as the soldier is entitled not to enlist; he is entitled even to object to conscription and take the consequences. But as S M has not given us a defence or justification of the enhancement of fees we need not write more on the point.

To have a good thing money must be spent and must come in some way and therefore let us tax only those who cannot resist leaving all Super graduates in the comfortable enjoyment of their incomes.

No doubt the examinees' nation will be benefited by his sacrifice but is the nation only his? Or is he and he alone in the best possible position to make a sacrifice?

S M displays his ignorance when he writes. An objection has been cited against raising University examination fees on the ground that in a certain Technological College in London a reduction of tuition fees has been proposed to attract more students in these exceptional times. The real facts are that in the Final Report of the Royal Commission on University Education in London a reduction of fees has been recommended in all London University Colleges. This Commission was appointed in 1910 and its Report was presented in 1913. None of its recommendations therefore have or could possibly have anything to do with war conditions as the war began on July 28 1914.

KRISHNAKANTA'S WILL

By BANKIM CHANDRA CHATTERJEE

[All rights reserved]

Part the Second

CHAPTER I

THE due course Gobindal wrote to Haridram to his dewan to inform him of their safe arrival in Benares. Afterwards he wrote occasionally to this officer but he never cared to send a line to his wife, which she naturally took very much to heart.

The last letter addressed to the dewan

was from Gobindal's mother. This was to inform him that Gobindal had recently left Benares.

When Bhramar heard this she thought she must keep her eye on Rohini, for she could not but feel some concern at this piece of intelligence. As for Rohini she kept at home and attended to her household work as usual except when she went out to the Barani tank to bathe and fetch

their drinking water from there. One day, however, Bhramar came to hear that Rohini was troubled with colic, in consequence of which her uncle was obliged to do the cooking for himself.

A few days alter she heard again that Rohini had made up her mind to visit the shrine of Tarakeswara. People afflicted with troublesome and obstinate diseases go there to find relief, and Rohini's purpose to take a trip to the place was to seek divine aid in order to be cured of her complaint.

News reached Bhramar one day that Rohini had gone to Tarakeswara. When she heard it she regarded her conduct as very suspicious. "Who knows," said she to herself, "that her illness is not feigned, and her going to Tarakeswara is not a mere pretext for getting away from home and her lawful guardian?"

On leaving Rohini had told her uncle that she could possibly be not away longer than a week at most. Months passed away, but nothing was heard of her. Neither had Bhramar had any tidings of her husband since he left Benares. Her anxiety for him preyed on her mind night and day. She wept and wept till it was feared it would seriously affect her health. At her request her sister-in-law wrote to ask her mother if she had got any letter from her brother. She wrote back to say that Gohindalal had been travelling over Joypur, Agra and other places, and had lately gone over to Delhi where he had said he would make a few days' stay before he left to go elsewhere.

Days passed, and Bhramar went to her father's house, thinking she might not feel very lonely and miserable there. But she soon found she was mistaken; and she returned to her father-in-law's again. After a time she had a letter sent again to her mother-in-law. In reply she told her that she knew nothing of her son's whereabouts, for he had not long written to her. Bhramar's continual anxiety for her husband had already begun to tell upon her health. Before the end of a year her health gave way, and she became confined to her bed.

CHAPTER II.

Hearing of Bhramar's illness her father, Madhabinath, went to see her at Hari-dragram. Madhabinath Sircar was a handsome middle-aged man of two and forty, though he looked four or five years

younger. As to his character opinions varied. According to many he was very shrewd and cunning. There were others (their number was not very small) who maintained that he was a good and upright man. Whatever he really was it was admitted on all hands that he was clever to the backbone; and, if the truth must be told, he was feared even by those who held a good opinion of him.

Bhramar was the only child of her parents. Madhabinath loved his daughter tenderly. The tears came into his eyes when he witnessed the wretched state of his daughter's health. Seeing her father weep, Bhramar burst out crying. For a while they wept in silence. "Papa," she said when they were a little composed, "I can feel I am not long for the world. I have a sum of money. I wish it could be put to good and charitable purposes. I wish you would see to it. Won't you, dear papa?"

Madhabinath said nothing. Her words wrung his very heart-strings. He rose and walked off to the outer house.

Madhabinath wept alone for a while. When he was somewhat settled, his grief gave way to a sudden feeling of indignation. "Is there no one in the world," he said to himself, "who can punish the wretches who have made my daughter's life so unhappy?" As he meditated upon it his eyes gleamed, he clenched his fist; he swore, "I will be revenged on them, I will. I will find out where they are if I have to cross hills and rivers to do it."

Thus determined he grew more calm and returned to his daughter. He spoke words of comfort to her. "Come, don't talk of dying," he said. "I am sure you will soon get back your health, and you will see many happy days again."

"Oh, I shall never see any, I shall never get well again," she sighed.

"You will, child. What's the matter with you? You are not treated here as you ought. I will take you home to Rajagram with me, where you will be taken good care of, and where under proper treatment you will get perfectly well in a little time."

Bhramar's father's house was at Rajagram, which, as we have said before, was only a few miles distant from Haridragram. Madhabinath stayed near his daughter for over two hours. After that he affectionately took leave of her, and

went and saw the dewari. He asked this officer if he had got any letter from his master.

"No, sir," he said, "we have not long had any tidings of him."

"Do you know any one with whom he is likely to correspond?"

"I don't know. Our much respected mistress writes from Benares to say that she has not long had any information of her son."

Madhabinath asked no more questions. He bade him goodbye and came away.

CHAPTER III

Needless to say that Madhabinath had heard all about Gobindalal's illicit connection with Rohini. He was resolved to track them wherever they were, and he said as he left the Kays' house, that he would leave no stone unturned to accomplish his object, though it seemed the fugitives had taken all possible care to avoid everything by which their tracks could be discovered. It suddenly occurred to him that Rohini's uncle was a poor man and that it was probable he got from Gobindalal a monthly assistance for his maintenance. So thinking he turned his steps in the direction of the post office, which was a few minutes' walk from the Kays' house.

A signboard on the wall of a mean thatched house with very insufficient light showed the post office. The sub-postmaster was seated upon a stool at a clumsy and very discoloured table of mango wood, on which there were letters, books, files, envelopes, stamps, a pair of scales, a gum water phial with a brush in it, and a few other things.

The salary of this official was fifteen rupees a month, and that of the postman under him seven rupees. The former wanted often to make his authority felt, but the latter was not of a very yielding temper, and used to think that the difference between them was just what there was between 'seven and fifteen annas'. Therefore whenever his superior officer was harsh and overbearing in his demeanour he told him to his face that he was not to put up with his hard words, and that he was sure he should not have to starve if anything ever happened that might lose him his situation. As the sub-postmaster was reading his subordinate a lecture, and wanting him

to know that he was the master there, Madhabinath with the careless air of a man who had great confidence in himself walked up and stepped into the office.

Seeing a strange gentleman the sub-postmaster stopped, and sat staring at his face like one who scarcely knew what to say. For a moment it occurred to him that he ought to speak a word of welcome to the gentleman but as he had never learnt good manners which had never been a part of his education, he could do nothing but sit still, looking very near like a dumb creature.

'Such an illbred fellow!' Madhabinath thought to himself. Aloud he said, 'A Brahmin I suppose?'

'Yes,' said the postmaster.

He bowed low, and the postmaster invited him to sit down.

Madhabinath looked about him for a seat, but as there was not another saving the one on which the postmaster was seated he looked rather embarrassed. The postman noticing this hastened to take a heap of torn rejected books from off an old rickety chair which stood in one corner, and dusting it, placed it near the gentleman, inviting him very courteously to sit upon it.

'What's your name? I think your face is familiar to me,' said Madhabinath, looking complacently at the postman as he took his seat.

'Please, sir I am the postman. My name is Haridas.'

'You are a good soul. I think I will have a smoke. Can't you procure a hookah?'

Madhabinath was not in the habit of smoking, neither had he ever seen the postman before. His wanting him to procure a hookah was a mere pretext for wishing to be alone with the postmaster with whom he meant to have a private talk. Haridas, however, thought that the gentleman was the likely one to give him a four anna bit or something like it, for he felt sure that he never meant to have his order carried out for nothing.

When Haridas had gone (he did not want to be asked twice) Madhabinath addressed the postmaster and said, 'I have come to you for some information.'

The postmaster was a Dacca man. However deficient in manners he might be, he understood his business perfectly well. So with a faint smile on his lips he said,

'You have come for an information Well?'

"I dare say you know Brahmananda Ghose?"

"Brahmananda? Yes,—no not well."

Madhabnath could see at once by his manner of answering the question that it would be pretty hard to draw him on but by a bit

'Do you have any letters to the address of Brahmananda?' he asked again

"You know this man, do you?" asked the postmaster

'What has that to do with what I want to know? I shall thank you to let me know what I want to'

Remembering the dignity of his post, and that he was the master where he was which fact there was no one to dispute, the postmaster wondered in his mind how an outsider could ever dare to talk to him in that fashion. He was offended. 'I am not bound—I mean the post office he said, assuming a look of gravity "to give you the information you want." With this he looked more grave, and drawing himself up commenced weighing some letters with an air which showed that he did not like to be disturbed in his work.

Madhabnath smiled. "You must not suppose," said he, "that I have come to ask you for an information gratis."

The words spoken had the effect of throwing him immediately. "No offence, sir," said the postmaster. "We are not to give out anything. That's against the rule. But as you are a gentleman and seem much in need of an information, I think I shouldn't refuse you it. Let me see. What's it again you wish to know?"

'Do you have any letters to the address of Brahmananda?'

"Yes," said the postmaster

"At what intervals?"

"Stop please there is no haste. I will tell you after I have been paid for what you know already. I mean no offence. Business is business."

Madhabnath felt greatly offended at his meanness and foolish behaviour. 'Do you know who I am?' he said, scanning him with his eyes.

'No, but whoever you may be, the post office is not bound to furnish the information you want. Your name, please?'

'Well, my name is Madhabnath Sircar. And since you do not know me I must tell you that I am wellknown in this

part of the country. I have got a band of clubmen under my control. If you be so foolish as to incur my displeasure the consequence of it will not be very pleasant, I can tell you. So you are free to answer or not answer my questions just as you like." As he delivered this speech he looked awfully grave as if to give greater effect to his words. The postmaster had heard that Madhabnath Sircar of Rajagram was a formidable man. He thought to make an apology, but he was so frightened that he could hardly utter a word.

'Look here man," continued Madhabnath, "I must know what I want to know. If you answer my questions faithfully and promptly I will make you an adequate recompense. But if instead you refuse to tell me what I want to know, as sure as you have a head on your shoulders I will have your office robbed and your house set on fire. And in court I shall know how to prove the charge completely against you. There!'

The postmaster was filled with dismay. He trembled visibly. Oh I beg your pardon sir," he appealed. "I took you for an ordinary gentleman who wanted to pump information out of me. Don't take any offence sir, I beseech you. I will gladly and readily answer any questions you may be pleased to ask."

'Well, then," said Madhabnath again, "at what intervals do you have letters to the address of Brahmananda?'

'Generally at a month's sir," said the postmaster.

"Were the letters hitherto received all registered letters?'

"Most of them."

'At what office were they registered?'

"I am sure I do not remember, sir."

"But you can tell me by looking at the receipts."

The postmaster consulted the receipts. "Prosadpur," he said.

'In what district is it?' asked Madhabnath again.

"Jessore," he replied after consulting the list.

'Will you now see," said Madhabnath, "if you had any registered letters to this man's address from any other place?'

He thoroughly examined the receipts and declared that all the letters hitherto received were addressed from Prosadpur.

Madhabnath was satisfied. He gave

him a ten rupee note, and he did not forget the postman, for whom, as he came away, he left a rupee, telling the postmaster to give it to him when he returned. But the poor fellow, we are sorry to say, never got it, for his superior, the sub-postmaster, to his shame it may be said, had not the least scruple to appropriate the gift to himself.

CHAPTER IV

Madhabinath laughed, as he walked along to think how he had frightened the foolish postmaster into telling him all he wanted to know. The talk in the village was that Robin without doubt had left home to join Gobindalal, their trysting place having been previously arranged. Madhabinath too had no doubt about that. He felt sure they were living together at Prosadpur, of which he could have no better proof than that Brahmananda had a remittance regularly sent him from there. However, to make assurance doubly sure he conceived a plan and resolved at once to put it into execution. He sent, on his return to the Roys' house, a note to the officer in charge of the police station, asking him to send a constable at once.

The police officer knew Madhabinath well, too well perhaps to think it at all safe to offend him, for when he had read the note, he readily sent a constable to him. Madhabinath put two rupees in the constable's hand and said, "You will have to do nothing but stand behind yonder tree so that we can see you from here." The constable walking away to do as he was told, he sent for Brahmananda. In a little time Brahmananda appeared, and Madhabinath invited him to sit down. There was no one there at the time.

The usual exchange of civilities over, Madhabinath opened a conversation with him, saying, "You were much liked and cared for by my late esteemed friend and relation, Babu Krishnakanta Roy. Now that his nephew is away we think it is our duty to help you out of any difficulty you may happen to get into. You, as I understand, are now in some scrape, and I sent for you to consult how I can best help you out of it."

Brahmananda paled. "Scrape" what scrape, sir? he almost cried in alarm.

"The police have been informed to the

effect that you have got a stolen note in your possession," said Madhabinath, looking as serious as he could.

Brahmananda looked as though he had dropped from the clouds. "A stolen note!" he exclaimed.

"You need not be astonished," said Madhabinath. "Maybe you received a stolen note and kept it without knowing or suspecting there was anything wrong."

"It is very strange, sir. I am sure I never received a note from any one."

"I knew nothing about it," said Madhabinath, looking about him, and speaking more softly. "But I heard it only this morning from the police. The police have told me that you received a stolen note from Prosadpur. Do you see that constable over there? He has orders to arrest you. I gave him a rupee and told him that I must have a talk with you first."

As Brahmananda looked in the direction indicated he saw the ominous figure of a constable with his unmistakable red turban and his badge and haton, and his consternation was such that he at once fell on his knees, imploring Madhabinath's protection.

"Courage, man," said Madhabinath. "Come, rise, don't be so affrighted. Rest assured you shall not be in disgrace if I can help it."

Brahmananda rose to his feet, and Madhabinath tried to reassure him, making him sit down by his side. "I have got the number of the stolen note," he said. "I had it from the police. Bring me the last letter from Prosadpur, and the currency note you received along with it. I have no doubt but the police have been misinformed. Granting they have not, and the number of the note received by you tallies with the number I have got here, still I can assure you that no harm will come to you. Believe me I know how to hush up the matter. Fear nothing. Now, go, bring the letter and the note."

Brahmananda, who felt that he had no alternative but to do as he was told, rose, walked hesitatingly a few steps as he looked timidly toward the constable, and stopped. Madhabinath ordered a servant to go with him, seeing that he was so afraid of the constable.

Brahmananda soon returned, and handed him the note and the letter he had last received from Prosadpur. In the letter Madhabinath found all he wanted to

know. Then, on pretence of comparing the numbers, he took a piece of paper from his pocket. "The number I have here," he said after a little, "does not correspond with the number of the note. Go home. You are free. The police have no hold on you."

Brahmananda drew a luxurious breath of relief. He waited not to speak a word of thanks, but left at once and hurried home as fast as his legs could carry him.

Madhabinath's thought next was of his daughter. He took her home and placed her under the treatment of a capable medical man. Afterwards he left home to go to Calcutta, whence he intended to start for Prosadpur.

On his arrival in Calcutta he saw a

friend whose name was Nishakar Das. Nishakar was younger than Madhabinath, and was a good jovial fellow. Being a rich man's son, and following no occupation, he had acquired a passion for travelling. "I am going to Prosadpur," said Madhabinath to him, "I shall be so glad if you will accompany me."

"I am ready to go with you, but why to Prosadpur of all places in the world?"

"Oh, I have some intentions of buying an indigo factory," said Madhabinath, concealing from his friend the real object of his intended visit to Prosadpur.

That day he started for the place in company with his friend.

(To be continued)

TRANSLATED BY D. C. ROY

GLEANINGS

A Red Indian Boy Artist

On the Grande Ronde Reservation in Yamhill County, Ore., there lives a little Red Indian boy whose silhouettes cut from pasteboard have won the attention



Silhouettes cut from life by a little Red Indian Boy

of the *Art World* (New York). Little Sampson Simpson is only five years old and has never had opportunities of seeing other children engaged in drawing

or any other form of artistic effort. All by himself he has picked up a knack of cutting silhouettes of living objects that he sees from day to day. The unbroken bronco backed by the wild reservation rider, the indignant steer with stiff front legs trying to dislodge the rufous cowboy, the frightened fleeing rabbit, the fish slipping free from the water, a curve which city children might think unnatural or even impossible, the hog fat and obstinate, the turkey the cock, the dog, the squirrel. He cuts no figures that do not show action. Nearly all his outlines have knees and the knees are generally bent.

This Indian boy artist does not trace his outlines. He directs the shears without guiding lines. He always represents action and he recognizes and expresses the particular action characteristic—within his experience and observation—of the animal he cuts out. When man appears in his silhouettes he is always in action.—*The American Review of Reviews*

A Collapsible Life-Boat

The new invention that may foil the deadly efforts of the U-boat hails from Germany and is described in *The Scientific American* (New York, February 24). Says this paper:

European inventors at the present time have their faces turned toward devices for destroying lives and property, but for all that they are still capable of moving in the opposite direction. It is in this connection that one Herr Meyer, of Berlin, has worked out the collapsible life-boat which we illustrate. When folded up the craft is easily carried in an ordinary knapsack, and it can be unpacked, inflated and placed in the water in two to three minutes. In its essential lines this boat, as the illustration shows, is an inflated rubber torus with the central space occupied by a wooden platform. It is two yards long and a yard wide; and although its total weight

KRISHNAKANTA'S WILL

BY BANKIM CHANDRA CHATTERJEE

(All rights reserved)

CHAPTER V

PROSADPUR in the District of Jessore is an obscure village, the only river or rather rivulet near being the Chitra which is about two miles distant from the place. On the banks of the rivulet, which flows sluggishly on, there are clusters of date palms and palmyras and various other trees among which can be heard the chirping of birds at all hours of day. The place has a desolate aspect for within two miles of it there are no houses except a few shops belonging to a bazar on the border of Prosadpur. Within a few hundred yards of the brook there is a large ancient building which once belonged to an Indigo factor, who lived and transacted his business here. The house, which had passed into more hands than one since it ceased to be used as a factory, has lately been bought by a gentleman, who has spent a considerable sum of money in repairing and furnishing it.

It is a two storied building with a broad courtyard now laid out in gardens. The veranda and the staircase are decorated with flower pots. On the upper story over the floor of the largest and most spacious room facing the veranda is spread a valuable carpet covered with a clean sheet, and the walls of it are hung with large mirrors and beautiful pictures, some of which undoubtedly show the vitiated taste of the present owner of the house. In this room opposite each other are seated two persons, one a beautiful young woman, and the other an elderly man with a thick grizzly beard and moustache. A glance at the man would be enough to let any one know that he is a Mohammedan. Being a musician he has been employed by the owner of the house to give lessons in music to the young lady. A fiddle, which lies between them, the music master presently takes up, and putting it into tune by giving the pegs a

few twists as he scrapes the bow over the strings to see if it is all right, he begins to play a sweet air, accompanying his voice on it, and signing to the young lady to follow. While the music is going on, the sweet silvery voice of the woman clearly distinguishable from the loud deep voice of the music master, in the adjoining room, which opens into this, a handsome young man is reading a novel, casting occasional glances through the open door at the young lady.

The reader perhaps need not be told that the young man is Gobindalal, and the young woman Rohini.

While the singing is going on a stranger enters the room and sits down unbidden. We know this man. He is Nishakar.

CHAPTER VI

Rohini had a nice comfortable room up stairs and she had every comfort that Gobindalal's money could buy. The servants over whom she exercised full control had their quarters below. In this solitary and out of the way place Gobindalal had as few visitors as he could wish to have. If any traders called, though such calls were few and far between, the servants would let their master know, and he would walk downstairs and see them on the ground floor where he had a room reserved for occasional use.

Having discovered Gobindalal's whereabouts Nishakar, with whom the reader is acquainted, approached the house, and standing at the entrance cried, "Who is here?"

Gobindalal had two servants—Sona and Rupa. Hearing a man at the entrance they quickly appeared before him. Nishakar's features which were pretty imposing and the costly clothes he had taken care to wear, made them pause a little wondering and exchanging looks with each other, for they had never known a gentleman of his appearance cross the threshold.

"Who do you want, sir," they both inquired at once.

"I want to see your master," said Nishakar.

"What name, sir?" asked Sona.

"You need mention no name," he said.

"Only tell your master that there is a gentleman at the door, who desires an interview with him."

The master had expressly told his servants that he did not wish to see any gentleman, so they were not very willing to carry the message. Sona was rather afraid and knew not what answer to make; but Rupa was brave and said, "I am afraid, sir, master will not receive you unless you have an appointment."

"That's none of your concern, my friend. Will you go and tell your master that there is a gentleman downstairs wanting to see him?"

Rupa was silent.

"Well, if you will not," said Nishakar, "I think I will go upstairs and introduce myself."

"Oh, don't, sir, pray. That will lose us our places," said both the servants appealingly, rather alarmed.

"Here is a rupee," said Nishakar. "I will give it to either of you who will bear the message to his master."

Sona certainly felt the temptation; but before he could make up his mind to accept the reward offered by the gentleman, Rupa, who was more clever and less scrupulous than his companion, was quick to anticipate him. He moved up very quickly and held out his hand to receive the gift. When he had secured the rupee in the folds of his cloth he leisurely walked upstairs to deliver the message to his master.

When Rupa had gone Nishakar put another rupee into Sona's hand and said, "Mind you let me know what your master says. I shall be waiting outside in the garden."

When Rupa went upstairs the master was engaged, and he had had to wait before he could deliver the message. As Nishakar walked up and down the garden, a beautiful young woman was standing at a window above, watching him.

Rohini, for it was she who was at the window, wondered in her mind where the gentleman was from, and what he could want with Gobindalal. It did not seem to her that he belonged to Hrudigram, for, if he did, she ought to have seen him

before. But he was certainly a very handsome man, she thought. His gait—how easy and graceful. His complexion, she must confess, was not very fair—not so fair as Gobindalal's; yet his eyes—were they not quite killing? Why should she not talk to him? What harm was there if she really meant to remain faithful to Gobindalal?

As she was occupied with these thoughts, Nishakar, as he walked up and down, happened to look up, and his eyes met Rohini's. Whether the exchange of looks had conveyed to each other any secret message we are unable to say, but Rohini thought he was a man to know, and she must know him.

Just at this time, finding the master was disengaged Rupa approached him and said, "There is a gentleman downstairs asking to see master."

"Where is he from?" asked the master.

"Please, sir, I do not know."

"So you have come to tell me there is a gentleman downstairs without knowing where he is from?"

Rupa did not wish his master to think him a fool, and he had the presence of mind to say, "I asked him, sir, but he would not tell me."

"Tell him then I cannot see him," said the master.

A little before the message was delivered, Rohini, having occasion to go to the window, had accidentally seen Nishakar walking in the garden.

It was late; and neither of the servants turning up Nishakar was impatient and re-entered the house. There was no one downstairs. He would not wait any longer, and he mounted the stairs to introduce himself. He had just reached the door of the room when Rupa said, "Here is the gentleman, master." Nishakar quietly stepped into the room and sat down uninvited.

The music stopped. Gobindalal was greatly vexed; but seeing that the visitor was a gentleman, he suppressed his feelings and said, "Who do you want, sir?"

"My business is with yourself," said Nishakar.

"With me? Your name, please?"

"Rashbehari De."

"Where do you come from?"

"Baranagar."

"Sir, if you had the patience to wait instead of intruding into my room, you

would have heard from my servants that I saw no one unless by appointment."

"I must beg your pardon for the intrusion. But allow me to tell you that my business with you is of such importance that it would have been hard to put me off with an answer like that. And now I am here I am not going to leave the house until I have let you know what my business is, and have got an answer from you."

"I think I don't want to know, but if you be very brief, as brief as you can, I may allow you to mention your business."

"My business may be mentioned in two words," said Nishakar.

"Well?" said Gobindalal, wondering what it could possibly be.

At this time Danesh Khan—for that was the name of the music master—was giving the how a rub on a piece of resinous gum preparatory to playing a fresh tune on the violin.

"Your wife Bhramar Dasī, wishes to lease her property, and—"

He had just begun when the music master interrupted him as he said, addressing himself to Gobindalal: "This is word number one, let him remember, sir, for he said he would mention his business in two words."

"—And I am the party who wishes to be the lease holder."

"This is number two," again broke in the music master, putting up the fore and the middle finger of his right hand together. "He ought to stop there."

"I beg your pardon, Khan sahib, are you counting pigs?" said Nishakar smiling derisively.

He had touched him at the most delicate point. The music master fired up at once. "Sir," said he, "please send away this illbred fellow who dares offer this in suit to a Musulman."

Gobindalal made no answer for it seemed his thoughts were elsewhere at the time.

"I had been to Handragram," said Nishakar, taking up the subject again. "Your wife wishes to lease the property. She let me know that if I could find out your whereabouts I should tell you that she wished to have your consent in the matter. The object of my visit is to communicate to you your wife's desire to grant me the lease which, she says, can not be done without your sanction."

Gobindalal was silent still. He looked rather sad and abstracted. Once more Nishakar put the matter clearly before him, and concluded by saying that his wife wanted from him a written permission without which she could not grant him the lease. Gobindalal easily swallowed what Nishakar told him, though the reader knows that his words had no foundation in truth. So after a while he very gently said, "The property is my wife's, not mine. It was given her by will by my uncle, and she might dispose of it as she likes. A written permission from me is of no significance, for I have nothing to do with it. That's the whole thing in a nutshell. Now you know what the fact is. I hope you will allow me to say goodbye."

Nishakar said no more. He thanked him and rose and came downstairs.

Gobindalal felt very low in spirits, and had Danesh Khan give him a sprightly song. The man chose one he thought would be liked but Gobindalal could find little or no pleasure in it. He next thought he would fiddle a little. He tried a certain melodious air the one he had been practising lately, but this evening he played very clumsily though it might be said that he already had a passable hand on the violin. He said to Danesh Khan that he did not feel very well, and told him to go home. He afterwards took up again the novel he had been reading but he could not give attention to it. So he threw aside the book and called Sona. "I want to sleep a while," he said to him. "Don't wake me before I awake."

The sun was about to go down, and he went and shut himself up in his room.

Gobindalal went not to sleep. He sat on the bed and wept silently. What made him weep we do not know, but probably it was the thought of his wife whom he had left for nearly two years and to whom he had been very cruel. Probably it was the reflection of his past and present sinful life which made him feel very miserable.

CHAPTER VII

When Nishakar came and sat in the big room where the music was going on, Rohini withdrew to the one next. Drawing the screen over the doorway which separated the rooms she stood behind to listen to the conversation that followed.

Standing aside, and lifting one side of the screen very slightly so that she could

view the gentleman that came, she overheard everything that was said. The gentleman had gone to Haridragram, she heard him say. Rupa had been standing by the door, listening. When the gentleman rose to leave, Rohini signed to Rupa from behind the screen to come to her.

He went to her, and she took him aside and said, speaking very softly, "I want you to do something. If you can perform it so that your master will know nothing of it I will give you five rupees."

Rupa was right glad. He thought he was in luck. "Let me but know your order, madam," he said, "and I will carry it out. I will take such care that master will not get any scent of it."

"Very well," said Rohini. "Walk down stairs after the gentleman. He comes from our village, and I want to ask him news of home. Make him sit where there is little chance of your master looking in if he have occasion to go downstairs. If he will not like to wait, urge him. Tell him I want to see him very much and shall take the earliest opportunity to run down to him. Take care, go."

"Fear nothing, madam," said Rupa, and he followed the gentleman very quickly.

"Will you just kindly step into that room, sir?" said Rupa, approaching the gentleman, as on coming downstairs he stopped short on his way to the door. "I have something private to communicate to you."

Nishakar, out of curiosity, following the servant into the room indicated, the latter placed a chair for him to sit down. When he was seated he communicated to him the message he bore.

Nishakar was delighted at what he heard, for it seemed to suggest to him some means he might adopt to punish Rohini and bring Gobindalal to his senses.

"It is such a risky business," he said. "I dare not hide in your master's house."

"He never comes into this room, sir," said Rupa.

"I grant what you say. But what if your master should happen to miss her, and going about the house to look for her find me closeted with your mistress?"

Rupa was silent. "Here in this solitary place," continued Nishakar, "where within two miles round not a single soul is to be seen where can I run to save my life if your master should attempt to murder

me? Tell your mistress that I am sorry I cannot comply with her request. Her uncle has asked me to say something very important to her, but I dare not see her in this house."

Rupa was not one to let the matter drop there and lose the offer of five rupees which was certainly a great deal more than he could ever in his life hope to earn in one day. So he said, "Perhaps you have no objection to see her somewhere outside this house?"

"Not at all," said Nishakar. "I was just thinking of that. On the bank of the rivulet there is a large banyan tree. I passed by it on my way hither. Do you know this tree?"

"Yes, sir."

"I shall be waiting near this tree. It is near dark. If your mistress can come between seven and eight she will be sure to find me there. Go and tell this to your mistress. I will wait just to hear what she says to it."

Rupa left at once to communicate the gentleman's words to his mistress. In a little time he returned with the news that she had accepted the time and the place and would see him without fail.

Full of glee Nishakar rose to leave while Rupa went upstairs.

CHAPTER VIII

When Rupa was out of the way Nishakar, finding Sona downstairs, called him and said, "How long have you been here?"

"Almost ever since master bought this house, sir," said Sona.

"What do you get a month?" asked Nishakar.

"Three rupees, exclusive of board and lodging."

"You are a very useful servant. You ought to get better wages, I am sure."

Sona was flattered. "You are very kind, sir," he said, "but it is very hard to get an employment here in this part of the country."

"If you go with me to Calcutta I can get you far better wages. I think you can get seven or eight rupees a month or even more."

"Would you kindly take me with you, sir?"

"Oh, I don't mind taking you with me, but yours is a very kind master. Can you make up your mind to leave his service?"

Indeed our master is very kind but we don't at all like our mistress. She delights in finding fault with us and often scolds and abuses us for nothing.

Oh I can see that very well. But can you make up your mind to go with me?

To speak the truth sir I have no mind to stay here not at all. If you will be so kind as to take me with you I can not be enough thankful.

Well I shall be glad to take you with me. But before you quit your master's service I would wish you to do something—something that will be for your master's good. You have eaten his salt and you ought to do it as a duty you owe to him.

What is it you wish me to do sir? I will gladly do it if it will do master good.

It will undoubtedly though of course it will go hard with your mistress. But she must have her desert. She has done much harm already and must be prevented from doing more.

Certainly she must. But what is it you wish me to do sir?

Your mistress sent a little while ago to tell me that she wished to see me this evening between seven and eight near the banian tree. You know this tree?

Oh yes sir. It is on the bank of the rivulet.

Yes I agreed to her proposal and told her that I would wait there to see her. Now you are to keep watch on your mistress. When you see that she has left the house and is on the way to the brook go and tell your master. But not a word of it to Rupa. Caution is the word.

Never fear sir. I will be sure to manage it as cleverly as you could wish it.

Nishakar chuckled. He left the house quickly and was gone.

It was dark already and the stars glittered in the sky. Nishakar soon reached the banks of the Chitra. He sat down on a stump to wait which he saw by chance near the banian tree. Beneath the starry vault of the heavens above the rivulet flowed quietly on the waters sparkling in places where they were not darkened by the shadows of the overgrowing trees. There was nothing to break the dismal stillness of the place except the cries of jackals and the hooting of owls which he heard close to him. Far off he could see some boatmen singing. He cast his eyes toward Gobindal's house which

looked gray with the light that gleamed through the open windows. He sat watching the light and could not but feel some pity for Rohini who in the midst of her fancied security was happy in the life she was leading. Yet why he thought should she not reap the consequence of her sin? She had blighted the happiness of Gobindal's wife. She had reduced her to the verge of death. He had sworn to his friend to punish her as she deserved. But who was he? He thought again to punish her? Every one was accountable to God for his own actions. God who would judge him would judge her. Yet who knew it was not He who had brought him here for her punishment? It seemed to him it was all His will and he was the mere instrument.

As he ran over these thoughts in his mind time flew imperceptibly till it had passed on to nine o'clock when happening to look about him he noticed a figure approaching the place where he was seated. Like a ghost it came where he sat and halted.

Who are you? asked Nishakar springing to his feet.

Who are you first? asked Rohini for it was no other than she.

I am Rishbehari said Nishakar giving her the fictitious name he had given to Gobindal.

I am Rohini she said throwing back her veil.

You are late Rohini he said smiling.

Oh I had to wait for an opportunity you know or I would have come earlier she apologized.

I was beginning to fear you had forgotten me.

Forget you she said. Impossible. When I looked upon you for the first time my heart leaped towards you.

She had just spoken these words when all on a sudden she was firmly grasped by the neck from behind.

Who is it? she cried in great alarm.

You will know presently said a gruff voice which belonged to the hand that gripped her.

Rohini knew it was Gobindal. She felt like a doomed woman. In her heart quake and terror she gasped. I am innocent I did not come out here with a bad motive as the gentleman here can tell you.

Nishakar was not there. On Gobinda

lal's appearance he had slunk away unobserved among the trees on the banks and vanished into the darkness.

"There is no one here," said Gobindalal

with a coolness which foreboded evil. "Come home with me."

(To be continued)

TRANSLATED BY D. C. ROY.

OUR INDUSTRIALISM*

BY G. C. SEN, M.A., B.L. DIPL. LEET'S UNIVERSITY, TECHNICAL CHEMIST.

WE have met here this evening to celebrate the first anniversary of our Club. The club is only one year old and it is still the construction period we are passing through. The progress made during this time has been summarised in the Secretary's report. It is still a baby, but the baby can stand now. What a pleasure it is for the parents to see their baby stand! Those that have become parents will fully realise it. The baby must be fed so that it may thrive. The baby must be fed well so that it may thrive well. The baby must be given healthy food so that it may become healthy and strong. No food is better for the baby than the natural food given by God in the mother's breast. The mother must be healthy to provide the baby with healthy milk. We have to provide this baby institution with healthy food if we want it to grow and flourish. We must be healthy ourselves. We must have a higher ideal before us, and must have our aims fixed. High ideal and high aspirations must be the food for our baby. Hopefulness and patriotism must be our guiding stars. Co-operation, sympathy and intellectual efficiency must be our stepping stones.

If we can not pursue an ideal our work here will end in eating, drinking, smoking and playing. But that is not the object of our club; our object is different. The name we have given to it is fully suggestive. Our object is to work for industrial progress by concerted action and co-operation. To ordinary thinkers

our programme may seem to be ambitious. *But the good thing never dies?* It is not the quantity that exercises influence, but the quality that does. Millions of hewers of wood and drawers of water would bow down to one single individual endowed with superior intellect. I wish that our club may be membered by men who can think and who by concrete example can put inspiration into those that are in despair. I wish this may be a place where many will look to for guidance. A congregation of representatives of so many different lines of thought is a force if the units of the congregation have intrinsic merit and energy in them.

Industry is not moneymaking. It is something higher than this. It is utilisation of the gift of God for the benefit of mankind. Moneymaking is an incidence of industry and not the industry itself. It is the intellect that gives the key with which "industry" is unfolded and it is the moneymakers that use this key for their own benefit. Intellect manifests a universal sympathy, selfless in its operations. Moneymaking apart from this "industrial intellectualism" is lifeless. It is stagnant in character and we become merely imitators. It is this "industrial intellectualism" we have to keep in view as our ideal, if we really want to be a force. Study and observation, knowledge based on experience are essential for the attainment of this "industrial intellectualism."

The conception of the law of limited liability enterprise is a boon to the world. It is mainly responsible for present industrial progress the world has come to. It has broken down the tyranny of

* Paper read by Mr. G. C. Sen, Personal Assistant to the Director General of Commercial Intelligence, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the Calcutta Industrial Club.

KRISHNAKANTA'S WILL

BY BANKIM CHANDRA CHATTERJEE.

(All rights reserved.)

CHAPTER IX.

ON reaching his house Gobindalal strictly forbade the servants to go upstairs.

He led Rohini up the stairs, her hand firmly held in his, took her into his bedroom and closed the door. Then settling himself on a chair at his desk he bade her stand before him.

She obeyed.

"Rohini," said Gobindalal, surveying her with a gaze under which she quailed, for in his eyes there was an unnatural glow showing the rage and tumult which convulsed his heart.

There was a pause. He pressed his hand on his fevered brow as if to collect himself.

"Rohini," he said again, "what do you think of me? Am I not a fool, the greatest fool that the world has ever seen?"

She was silent. She dared not utter a word and hung down her head.

"Yes," he continued, "the greatest fool that the world has ever seen! I have sacrificed everything for you. My wife, poor artless creature—I have blighted her happiness. With her I was happy as never a husband was happy with his wife. When I left her to go and live with you it broke her heart. I disregarded her tears and entreaties. The blow it gave to her heart—oh, it was a severe blow, severer than one can imagine."

He paused for a moment, and then went on, speaking more to himself than to her: "Poor innocent girl! I have robbed her of her peace and happiness, I have given her a heart-ache for life. And what are you, Rohini, that I should have given up all that I most valued on earth to go and become your slave!—your slave! What a fool I was to have yielded to the witchery of your fair face!"

He suddenly rose, and carried away by rage, grief and remorse kicked her down.

"Get up, woman," he growled, resuming his seat.

She obeyed tremblingly. She sobbed, but he cared not.

"Stand where you are," he said. "You wished to die once. You attempted to commit suicide by drowning. Do you dare again to die?"

"Death will be welcome to me," she said in a piteous wailing tone of voice, "after such treatment as I have received at your hands."

"Then stand still."

Gobindalal opened his desk and took out his pistol. It was loaded as it often used to be. Presenting it before her he said, "This is loaded, and I will give you what you say will be welcome to you."

She had once wished to die when she had her grief; but now her love of life was as strong in her as in any one. She quaked with fear to see the loaded pistol. She had a presentiment that her hour was come. "Do not kill me," she appealed, "oh, do not for your sake, for mine. Spare my life, do, and I will leave the house this instant never to show you my face again."

Gobindalal was deaf to her entreaties. His blood was up. He had no pity. He raised the pistol and took aim at her forehead. She uttered a terrified scream. The next moment she fell. There was a deep gash in her forehead, from which the blood gushed.

The servants heard the report and were alarmed. At first they did not dare to go upstairs, but when they did after a while, they stood aghast at the sight of their mistress lying in a pool of blood. The room was vacant. A pistol lay on the floor. The master was gone.

CHAPTER X.

Murder, though it be committed in a secluded place, and under cover of the darkness of night, will out, and the public will hear of it. The village watchman, having come to know that a murder had

been committed at the 'old factory house', as it was called, hurried on the same night to inform the officer in charge of the police station of it. The police station was about twelve miles distant from Prosadpur, so this officer did not turn up until nine o'clock the next morning. On his arrival he examined the dead body. Then after securing the pistol he held an inquiry into the case, and sent his report to the higher authorities. He next had the dead body sent on sheeted and bound up, in a cart in charge of the watchman to the nearest hospital for post mortem examination. Afterwards having eaten his meal, he earnestly set to search for a clue that might lead to the discovery of the murderer.

Immediately after Gobindal had committed the murder he threw down the pistol and escaped by a secret door at the back of the house without being seen by any one. He travelled the whole night and the day next to put many miles of distance between himself and Prosadpur. In the village of Prosadpur he had assumed the name of Chunilal Dutt. His servants knew not what his real name was neither where he had come from. The sub-inspector in charge of the police station, having gone about for a time in vain to find a clue, gave up the search and sent a report, saying that the culprit had absconded.

A few days afterwards a very capable detective inspector was sent up from Jessore to investigate the case. Fichel Khan, for that was the name of the inspector, searched the house thoroughly and found some letters from which he came to know the criminal's native village and his real name, and the name also of the woman who lived with him. He went in disguise in search of him to Haridragram, but in vain, for Gobindal had never gone there.

Leaving Rohini to her fate Nishakar returned that night very quickly to Madhabinath who had taken up their lodgings at a shop in the bazar at Prosadpur. He told his friend what he had done. "You have not acted wisely," said Madhabinath, "for Gobindal might be induced to commit something desperate for which he would be certainly arraigned in court."

But what had been done could not be recalled. They, however, passed the night

in great anxiety. And what were their surprise and alarm when they heard the next morning that a man named Chunilal Dutt, who had lived for nearly two years at the 'old factory house', had murdered his wife for reasons not known to any one and decamped. They were very sorry to think of Rohini's fate, but they were a great deal more afraid and concerned for Gobindal, whom they feared, the police would be sure to find out. From that day forward they began to live in the hazard very cautiously, and when they knew that the police had failed to find out any clue, they felt a bit easy in mind and returned to Calcutta.

CHAPTER XI

Madhabinath was come home. Bhramar was at her father's. There was an expression of sadness in her face, which no one could fail to see. Her father said no more to her than that Gobindal was quite well for he feared that if she heard of the rash and violent deed he had done it would very seriously affect her health. However, as he had told this in confidence to his wife, who, wanting to unburden herself, had cautiously and secretly imparted it to their widowed daughter, Bhramar before long heard of it. The news, as might be expected was at first crushing to her, but finally she had learned to be resigned.

Her elder sister, Jamini, said to her one day, "It seems to me that Gobindal will be safe to come and live at his own house now."

"What makes you think so?" said Bhramar.

"Why, he was not known by his real name while he was away. How then can the police know that he is the very man who lived at Prosadpur?"

"Didn't you hear that the police went in search of him to Haridragram? That shows that they are in possession of his real name."

"However, I think," said Jamini, "there is nothing better he can do than to come home, for then he can command his finance, and father says the police care for nothing but silver."

A tear sprang to her eye. "That's very true," she said, "but who is to give him that advice? Who knows where he is hiding?"

"Gobindal, I trust, will himself soon

feel that he will be more safe to live at his own house at Haridragram than elsewhere."

"I doubt he will come."

"Oh, he will, I tell you. My prediction will come true, you will see."

"Well," said Bhramar, "if no harm could ever come to him at Haridragram, then I would a thousand times wish him to come, and would fervently pray God to bring him home. But if he cannot be safe to live at his own house, then may his instinct keep him away. God have mercy on him!"

"But, dear sister, I think you will do well to go and live at Haridragram, for who knows when he may come, being, as not very unlikely, short of money? If he hears you are not there he will go away."

"Oh, I can see that, but who will look after me there now that I am in such poor health?"

"Why, I shall most gladly live with you at Haridragram."

"Well, I will go. You need not go now. You may ask mother to arrange for my going to-morrow. But forget me not, dear sister, forget me not in the day of trouble when I shall expect you to come and stay with me."

"Oh, why do you talk thus, dear?"

Bhramar wept. "I wonder if he will ever think to come," she murmured.

"My mind tells me he will. He will return a very different man from what he was when he went from you. Come, dry your tears, dear, and think of the joy of the meeting that will be."

"Joy! Oh, this heart—"

The words stuck in her throat. She was too much moved.

¶ Jamini could not see, as her sister did, what the consequence of that most unfortunate act would be. She did not seem to think of the murder committed by Gobindalal, which Bhramar could never for a moment forget, being ever and anon tormented with the horror of the punishment which invariably followed such a rash and violent act.

CHAPTER XII.

Bhramar went again to her father-in-law's. Day after day, and week after week she waited and waited, poised between hope and doubt, the coming of her husband, but Gobindalal never came. It was now the

third year since he left home; and that year passed away, and also the next, at the end of which she was ill again. For months she had been going into a consumption, and she was now troubled with a hacking cough. Day by day she was getting worse till it seemed to her that her end was not far away. Then the fear that she might have to go off without seeing her husband haunted her night and day.

The fifth year was in. At the commencement of it news reached Haridragram that Gobindalal had been found out, arrested and brought over to Jessore. It was heard said that he had been living away at Brindaban in the guise of a mendicant, and the police, having got scent of it, had traced him and brought him over from there. It was said that he was to receive his trial in Jessore.

Bhramar soon heard of Gobindalal's arrest. She had the dreaded news from her dewan, who had got a letter from Gobindalal. The letter ran as follows—

"I am going to jail. If it could be thought fit to spend a few thousands for my sake—a favour which, I know, I do not deserve, there is no time to be lost. I have no wish to live, but I cannot endure the thought of dying the death of a felon on the gallows. I expect I may not be allowed to be hanged if it could be helped. Make no mention of this letter to my wife, but tell her that you have had the information from a reliable source."

When Bhramar heard the news, she immediately sent information to her father, asking him to come at once. Madhabinath came without delay, and she put fifty thousand rupees in currency notes and Government paper into his hand. "O father," she exclaimed, weeping, "exert your utmost to save his life. Spend any sum. Nay, I will fling our whole fortune at the feet of the police to save him."

Madhabinath comforted his daughter as best as he could, and started for Jessore that very day. On leaving he urged his daughter to bear up, saying that as there was no evidence he had committed the murder he earnestly hoped that he would be able not alone to bring his son in law home, but also a considerable part of the money he was taking with him.

When he arrived at Jessore Gobindalal was in jail. But what he heard was very discouraging. The inspector, Fichel Khan,

had sent up witnesses to be examined after thoroughly investigating the case. He had failed to find out Rupa and Sonu, who were in the employment of Gobindalal. Knowing that in the absence of any witnesses it would be difficult to bring the charge home to the prisoner the inspector had sent up three men, bribed by him and tutored, to give evidence against the accused in the magistrate's court. When the case came up for hearing before the magistrate the witnesses declared upon oath that they had seen Gobindalal Roy alias Chunilal Dutt shoot Rohini dead by firing a pistol. This happened they said, immediately after their arrival in the old factory house at about nine o'clock at night. On being questioned why they went there, they said they went as on other previous occasions, to hear the girl sing. They had heard they said, that the girl was in the prisoner's keeping for over two years. The magistrate was easily convinced, and committed the prisoner to the sessions.

Madhabnath had procured the address of the witnesses. He saw them at their houses and got them to come over to his lodgings. "What you have said before the magistrate," he said to them, "you are not to mind. Before the sessions judge I would have you say that you know nothing about the case. If you will agree to say as I propose I will give you a thousand rupees each. To each of you I will pay in advance five hundred rupees now, and the rest when the prisoner has been released."

"But we shall be imprisoned," said they, "if we bear false witness."

"Fear nothing. I will prove in court by witnesses that Fichel Khan compelled you by endgelling and threats to ruin you if you refused to say what he wanted you to say, to give false evidence before the magistrate."

The witnesses who had never in their life seen a hundred rupees together were easily tempted by the offer of ten times the sum. They agreed to do as they were asked, and they were paid five hundred rupees each in advance.

The day fixed for Gobindalal's trial soon came. The prisoner was in the dock. The witness first named was called up. He took his stand in the witness box and was sworn. He was then examined by the Government pleader who questioned him,

saying, "Do you know Gobindalal Roy alias Chunilal Dutt?"

"No, I am sure I do not know any one of that name," he said.

"But you have seen him when he was living at the Prosadpur factory house?"

"Never."

"Were you ever acquainted with Rohini?"

"Rohini?"

"I mean the girl who was murdered, and who lived at the Prosadpur factory house."

"I never knew her."

"How did Rohini die?"

"The rumour is that she committed suicide."

"Don't you know anything about the murder?"

"None at all."

The Government pleader then read out the evidence given by the witness in the magistrate's court, and said, "Did you not say these words before the magistrate?"

Yes, I did."

"Why did you make such deposition as that if you do not know anything about the murder?"

The witness here made a show of crying. "Fichel Khan compelled me by thrashing," he said, to give false evidence before the magistrate. He threatened to ruin me if I refused to say what he wanted me to say."

And he bared his back and exposed to view some black marks which he had got from a recent fight with his brother, as the marks of Fichel Khan's beating.

The Government pleader looked somewhat disappointed. He ordered the next witness to be called up.

After he had been sworn he was examined. And he answered exactly after the manner of the first. He had got up a sore in his back, which he showed as the result of the cruel treatment to which he had been subjected.

The last witness called only echoed the words of the two who had been examined before him. He said that had it not been for his great dread of the inspector who swore he would do him material harm if he durst refuse to say what he would have him say nothing could have induced him to perjure himself.

The judge for want of evidence, ordered the prisoner to be discharged. And as he was greatly displeased with Fichel Khan

he ordered the magistrate to inquire strictly about the conduct of the inspector in connection with the case.

During his trial Gohindalal was wondering what could make the witnesses say what was quite conflicting with what they had said before the magistrate, but when he happened to cast his eyes on Madhabinath he understood the whole affair. After his discharge he was once more taken to the jail where he had to await the order for his release. As he was

about to be removed Madhabinath went up and whisperingly told him in his ear where he was putting up, and to see him without fail after being let off from jail. But after his release Gohindalal never saw him. And Madhabinath, after waiting for him a few days, was at length obliged to return to his daughter to Haridragram.

(To be continued)

TRANSLATED BY D. C. ROY.

THE RISE OF SHAHJI BHONSLA

(A corrective of the legendary history current among the Marathas)

True Chronology

- A.D.
 1594 Shahji born
 1600 Ahmadnagar captured and Bahadur Nizam Shah imprisoned by Akbar
 1601 Burhan Nizam Shah set up by the nobles as king at Parenda. Becomes puppet of Malik Ambar about 1609
 1604 Shahji married to Jija Bai
 ? 1609 Malik Ambar recovers Ahmadnagar, loses it in 1617
 1623 Shambhaji born
 1626, 14 May Malik Ambar dies, Fath Khan succeeds as wazir
 " 22 Sep Ibrahim Adil Shah dies, Muhammad Adil Shah succeeds
 1627 Shivaji born
 " 29 Oct Jahangir dies
 1628 Shahji raids Mughal Khandesh unsuccessfully
 ? April 1630 Nizam Shah imprisons Fath Khan, Hamid Khan becomes wazir
 ? June " Lakshji Yadav murdered
 ? July " Shahji conquers Panaji and Konkan. Is attacked by Bijapur
 ? Dec " Shahji joins Mughals
 ? Mar 1631 Mughals besiege Parenda unsuccessfully
 ? Dec " Burhan Nizam Shah releases Fath Khan
 ? Feb 1632 Fath Khan murders Burhan, and crowns Bahadur Nizam Shah
 ? June " Shahji deserts Mughals
 ? Nov " Fath Khan offers submission to Shah Jahan. Shahji joins Bijapuris
 1633 February, Mughals besiege Daulatabad, Shahji attacks them.
 " 17 June Daulatabad (with Bahadur Nizam Shah) capitulates
 " Aug. Murari weighs an elephant at Tulapur
 ? Sept. Shahji sets up Murtaza Nizam Shah II
 " Nov. Shahji raids environs of Daulatabad and Bidar, is pursued back.
 1634 February, Shuja besieges Parenda. Raises the siege in May

- November Shahji creates disturbance near Daulatabad. Is expelled and chased by Khan-i-Dauran in Jan.—Feb. 1635
 1635 Civil war between Khawas Khan and other Bijapur nobles
 " Oct Nov ? } Khawas Khan murdered
 " } Murari Pandit executed
 1636 Feb May Shahji, attacked by Khan-i-Zaman and Shasta Khan. He besieges the Mughals in Junnar city
 " May Treaty of Peace between Shah Jahan and Bijapur
 " June-Oct, Final Mughal campaign against Shahji, who makes surrender of Murtaza and forts and enters Bijapur service.

THE rise of the Bhonsla family is closely connected with the dissolution of the Ahmadnagar kingdom, within whose territory lay their homes, Bilora, Chamargunda, and finally Poona, and to whose service belounged Shahji, his father-in-law Lakshji Yadav, and many of their relatives. The declining fortunes of the dynasty greatly added to the value of able and enterprising leaders of mercenary hands and gave them splendid opportunities of winning wealth, power, and large estates for themselves.

In August 1600 Akbar had captured the capital Ahmadnagar and sent its king Bahadur Nizam Shah (a nephew of the famous Chand Bibi) to a State prison. But the entire kingdom was far from being conquered or even nominally occupied. That task required 36 years more. Soon after the fall of the capital, the Nizam Shahi nobles retired to the provinces, to

style, keeping his whereabouts as best as he could from the knowledge of any of his friends or relations. His days thus passed until at the end of a twelve month from the time of his leaving Prosadpur his funds were exhausted and he was in distress. Then after six years he thought he would write a letter to his wife.

He took the writing materials and sat down to write. And he could scarcely keep the tears out of his eyes as he was about to put pen to paper. Was his wife alive? If she was not, what was the good of writing? But he must know the fact. If his letter was not acknowledged he might be sure of the worst.

For a long while he thought how to word his letter. At length he began thus —
"Bhramar

"After six years this bad man is writing to you. Read through the letter, or you may tear it up without reading, just as you like if you do not care to know the contents.

"You will have heard all. It was as luck would have it, but I fear you will think that I say it not as I feel but only because, being in distress I need your help very much.

"I do feel it and have felt it often though really I am in great distress. I am penniless. I earnestly ask you to send me some money. If you refuse, I have no alternative left but to beg my bread from door to door but I had much rather die of hunger than stoop to that.

"I have no one to go to. Had mother been alive (I am sure you have heard of her death) I would have gone to Benares to her. But Fate is resolved to make me unhappy.

"I am suffering hunger. I think I will go to Haridragram. You will ask how I can show my face there—I who am a disgrace to the name of Roy, who committed murder. But what care I now for what people will say? Bo you, however, not think worse of me than you can help. For the pang of hunger I ask you to send me some money. Will you comply with my request? Will you for pity's sake?

"Gobindalal"

Gobindalal posted the letter wondering what the answer would be.

The letter duly reached Bhramar, who knew the hand at a glance. She opened it with a trembling hand and went and

shut herself up in her room. When she was alone she read it through not once or twice or thrice but many times over the tears streaming down her face, and she wiping them away as often as they threatened to fall off and blot the letter.

Bhramar did not open the door again that day. When her sister-in-law called her to come to supper she told her she was feverish; and she was believed as her health had, for a long time, become very bad.

She had passed a sleepless night. When she got out of bed the next morning she actually felt feverish, but she seemed calm and resigned. She had decided what reply she would send and she now began at once without thinking —

"I am in receipt of your letter.

"The property which is legally yours, I have long made over to you. Although you tore up the deed of conveyance (you remember you did) there is a copy of it at the Registrar's office.

"I wish you would come home.

"In your absence I have saved a large sum of money. It is yours.

"Out of this money I shall, if you will let me take a small sum. I ask no more than eight thousand rupees. This I want for my own maintenance.

"I will go to my father's. Kindly let me know when you are coming home so that before I leave I may arrange things against your coming.

"I think it is better we should never meet again and I am sure you wish it too.

"I shall look to hear from you again by an early post.

Bhramar

In due course Gobindalal received his wife's letter. He was struck by the singularly cold manner in which it was worded. He wrote back to say that with respect to going home he had changed his mind but that he would feel very thankful if she would kindly send him a monthly assistance.

In reply to his letter his wife wrote again to say that she would send him monthly five hundred rupees which she thought would be sufficient to make him comfortable. She would have wished to send more had she not feared that the money might be squandered. Furthermore she said that she had not many days left and that she saw no reason why because he would not live

with his wife, he should live away from his native village and his home.

Gobindalal, however, could not make up his mind to go home, and he continued to live in Calcutta.

CHAPTER XIV.

It happened that Bhramar fell so ill again that she became confined to her bed. On hearing of it her sister, Jamini, came to Haridragram to nurse her. The doctor, under whose treatment she had been placed, was not without his fears about her. Her disease was rapidly on the increase, eating into her vitals, until her strength completely failed. Then it seemed that death was not distant. Madhabinath was now constantly by his daughter's bedside, feeding her, and administering medicine, with his own hands.

A month flew by. She was worse and worse. The doctor could well see what the end would be, and ventured one day to pronounce that her case was hopeless.

"Dear sister," said Bhramar to Jamini, "I shall never get well again. It is no use my taking medicine any longer, for I feel that the cold hand of death is upon me. I love a moon-light night. If I die next month I wish it could be on the night of the full moon. I shall wait the day, sister. Some thing in me tells me that I shall not outlive it."

Jamini wept. They urged her no more to take medicine, for they felt it was no use. However, as time went on she was found more and more cheerful till she again seemed as jolly and jocose as in the happy old days. In vain did Jamini entertain a hope that she might yet recover when, for the first time for many days, she found her sister in such good spirits. She little thought that her cheerfulness was only like the flash of a lamp about to go out.

Her end drew nearer and nearer; yet she was calm and wore a smile on her face. At length arrived that last terrible day and she knew it by Jamini's silent weeping and an exchange of significant looks among those about, who had called to see her. "There was an awful silence in the house. 'I feel very uneasy; I fear to-day is the last day of my life,' she said when she was alone with her sister."

Jamini burst into loud sobs.

"Do not weep," she said, "oh, do not,

dear sister, until I am gone. I have only a few hours left. I wish to talk to you while I can."

She wiped away her tears and nestled closer to her, trying to look more easy as she smoothed back a few stray locks that fell over the pale brow.

"I wish to be alone with you for a while, sister," said Bhramar. "I wish for something."

Evening drew on, and then it ran into night.

"Is it a moon-light night?" asked Bhramar.

Jamini stepped up to an open window and said it was.

"Open the window nearest me, top and bottom, and let me look upon the moon-light," she said. "I love it very much."

Jamini did as she was asked, and let in a flood of moon-light, that lit up a portion of the sick-room.

"Dear sister," she said again, "will you open that window there and see if there are any flowers growing in the garden below?"

Seven years before in summer time Gobindalal used occasionally at day-break to stand at the window indicated, to enjoy the freshness of the dawn and the sweet perfume of flowers wafted from the garden below. That window had never been opened since, and her sister had now some difficulty in throwing it open, for its having for long been allowed to remain closed.

Jamini looked attentively. "I see nothing," she said, "except a few withered trees and a rank growth of weeds and other useless plants."

"Seven years before there was a garden there," said Bhramar, sighing. "For want of care the trees have withered and died out."

A silence fell between them. After a while she said again, "I love flowers. Will you order a maid to get me some?"

The order was quickly given to a servant woman, and in a little time she brought in a quantity of roses and other sweet-smelling flowers.

"Strew these on my bed," she said, "as on the night following my bridal."

Jamini did it with an affectionate care.

"That will do," she said. "But—oh, how I wish—" She stopped; and a big tear slowly coursed down her cheek.

"What else you wish done, dear? Oh, you

tell me I cannot bear to see you weep"
said Jamini.

"How I wish he had come! When he left me I proudly told him he would repent and seek me again some day. Oh if I could but see him at my death—if Then—then I shall have forgotten all my sufferings through seven long years."

"Be comforted love!" said Jamini. "You will see him very soon. Rest assured you will."

"Ah never! It is God's will that I should be denied even this momentary happiness for I am on the very threshold of the next world."

"Dear sister I did not think it proper to tell you without preparing you for the news lest the excitement should have any very bad effect on you. He is come. Gobindal is here. I rather wrote to tell him of your illness. He arrived only about two hours ago."

She made a feeble effort to rise but Jamini prevented her. Tears flowed fast from her eyes. "Oh bring him here!" she said as soon as her emotion allowed her to speak. "Go quick—leave me alone. There is no time to be lost."

Jamini rose and left the room. In a little time with a soft faltering step Gobindal after many years entered his own chamber.

There was death-like stillness in the room where in one corner a lamp burned low.

Sadly and softly he approached her and sat down by her side on the bed. Both remained mute for a while as they gazed at each other with eyes which overflowed with tears.

"Come nearer to me," she said when she had the control of her voice.

He crept closer to her and took her wasted hand in his. "Oh can you forgive me?" Bhramar! he said speaking hesitantly.

"I have forgiven all—all before you could ask. May God forgive you."

There was a pause.
"Kiss me," she said again. "One last kiss to say that you love me yet."

He bent over her and gently pushed the hair from her brow and kissed her the tears gushing from his eyes. "Oh I was mad when I left you," he said in the greatest anguish of his heart.

"I am happy. And her features lit up in the brightness of a smile. "I try

your hand in a farewell blessing on my head," she said again. "And—and speak the wish that I may be happy—hereafter. Then before he knew it and while her hand was held in his death stole imperceptibly upon her and she passed out of life as quietly and peacefully as a child falls asleep on its mother's breast."

CHAPTER XV

Bhramar's eyes were for ever closed upon this world. Gobindal's mind was torn with grief. Languid as his sorrow was he bore it calmly—a hurricane within a deep tranquility outside. With the help of his relations, to perform the last rites, he carried the remains of his wife to the place of cremation. And by the time all was over it was near day-break which with the rest he entered the water to bathe.

On his return home he sought his chamber where a ghastly vacancy stared him in the face on every side. He avoided company and kept indoors to brood over his sorrow in solitude.

The day drew to a close, and night came on. He sat on where he was, reflecting upon the past and the present, till after many weary waking hours sleep stole over his senses and he forgot his sorrow and slept.

It was soon morning. The sun rose again and the birds chirped among the trees and he awoke to find the dull monotonous sky of daily life and she gone forever.

Gobindal had loved two persons—Bhramar and Rohini. His love for the former lay in his heart and she was his true and devoted wife. The latter he loved for her looks. His love for her lay on his eyes and therefore it was bound to be short-lived. His senses had been caught by her beauty although his heart was elsewhere. When he left his wife he knew that he was doing her a great wrong, but he was so mad after Rohini that he was determined to have her at any cost. The moment he was disenchanted his eyes opened. Then he was filled with remorse. Then he fully realised the difference between these two kinds of love: The one pure and unselfish, the other impure and selfish. The one love and the other desire. The one heaven and the other hell. His behaviour to his wife broke her heart and finally led her on a

bed of sickness which she never left again. When she died he felt that he had murdered her with his own hands just as he had murdered Rohini, and great was the agony of the remorse he experienced. Away from his wife he had never for a moment been able to forget her. She had filled his heart as completely when he had been touring, as when he had been leading a voluptuous life at Prosadpur. She was within ever and always, and Rohini without.

The sun was high in the sky, getting gradually brighter and stronger. Gobindal went downstairs and strolled out more mechanically than otherwise to where was once a beautiful little garden overlooked by one of his chamber windows. It had been enclosed by a hedge; but the fence was nearly all gone, and not a trace could be seen of the once lovely garden his own hands had reared.

Out of there he went straight to his favourite garden on the embankment of the Baruni tank. Almost ever since he left home it had been quite forgotten, so that it was everywhere overgrown with weeds, nettles, thorn-bushes and other useless plants. Most of the marble figures stood without heads or limbs, and one or two actually lay prostrate upon the ground. But Gobindal was quite indifferent about all this. The one thought that completely occupied his mind was the thought of his dead wife whom his conscience told him he had killed by his cruel and reckless behaviour.

There were now many bathers in the tank; and a few young lads were noisily gay as they made an attempt at swimming, dashing and spluttering water. Gobindal, however, took no notice of anything. He went and sat down at the foot of a broken marble figure near by and was soon lost in his own thoughts.

There he remained till it was noon. He felt not the scorching sun overhead, so swallowed up was he in the thought of his wife whom he had lost. Suddenly arose the thought of Rohini in his mind, and he shuddered at the recollection of the horrid deed he had done. Then his thoughts were divided between Bhramar and Rohini. At one time he thought of Rohini, at another he thought of Bhramar. This continued for long while till he fancied he saw his wife's vision before him. It faded away, and in its place there rose up the beautiful

apparition of Rohini. He mused and mused away till in every tree near about he imagined he saw a likeness of Bhramar—of Rohini. If there was a rustling of the leaves he thought it was Rohini speaking in a whisper. If the birds warbled among the trees he fancied she was singing. The loud talk of the bathers in the tank sometimes sounded in his ear like the voice of Bhramar, at others like the voice of Rohini. If anything stirred among the bushes near it seemed as if Rohini flitted past him. The noise of the wind murmuring among the leaves appeared to him like the sobs and sighs of Bhramar. In fact he was so deeply under the spell of his own imagination that he fancied he heard them in every sound and saw them in everything around.

The hours passed on to afternoon, but Gobindal was there still at the foot of the statue, and as motionless as the statue itself. Then the afternoon lengthened towards evening, and the evening towards night, but he knew nothing of the hour. Since morning he had not tasted a morsel of food. His relations, having sought him in vain, concluded he had left for Calcutta.

Darkness now fell upon the quiet village and enveloped the garden and the tank. The stars shone out one by one in the black azure of the sky; everything was still. But Gobindal saw nothing. He was in the midst of a waking nightmare in which only Bhramar and Rohini prevailed.

Suddenly in the midst of his deep meditation Gobindal's heated and fevered brain conjured up before him a vivid figure of Rohini. He thought he heard her say aloud:

HERE—

Gobindal did not remember that Rohini was no more. He unconsciously asked the fancied vision—"Here, what, Rohini?"

And he heard Rohini's voice say again:

IN THIS TANK!

Gobindal asked again, "Here, in this tank, what?"

Again Rohini's voice sounded:

I DROWNED MYSELF!

An inward voice, born of his own unsteady head, seemed to say, "Shall I drown myself?"

The answer from within came, "Yes; at once—die. Bhramar is looking out for

She will redeem us by her own virtue from the penalty of our sin.

In wonderment and dismay Gobindalal closed his eyes. A cold tremble came over him. Presently he felt so faint that he fell in a stupor off the foot of the marble figure where he had sat.

In a trance in which he was he saw before him in a gleam a resplendent form of Bhramar. It said: Do not die. Why should you? You have lost me. But there is One dearer than myself. Live, love Him, you will be happy.

There Gobindalal lay all night in a half-dreamy, half-senseless state. Next morning his relations hearing of the plight in which he lay hastened to him, restored him to his senses and brought him home. Soon after this he fell very ill. He had a fever and a fever of the worst kind for it attacked both mind and body. Some days later he became delirious and for a week after that hung between life and death. He was treated with great care. After about three months he was well again. Then all expected he would continue to stay at home, but they were mistaken. He left the house one night without being noticed by any one and was gone. But whither he was gone no one knew.

Seven years elapsed, and Gobindalal was not heard of. The natural inference from this was that he was no longer amongst the living. His sister's son Sachikanta of whom we had no occasion to speak before, came into his estate, having attained his majority.

Sachikanta had heard an account of the errors of his uncle's life and of the sad consequences which resulted from them. He used pretty often to come out to the garden, which was once his uncle's favourite resort but which now had the look of a desert. Often would the young man's eyes fill with tears whenever he missed over the mournful end of his uncle's life and the sufferings his good young wife had been through.

Months had gone by. Sachikanta reclaimed the garden. In it he planted varieties of flower trees, constructed spacious gravel walks and set up new marble figures in place of those that were either broken or deformed, so that it looked as beautiful again as in the old happy days of Gobindalal's life.

One day when Sachikanta was taking a stroll in his garden there came to him a man who was habited after the manner of an ascetic. He wore long matted hair on his head, and his beard almost kissed his breast. 'Do you know me?' said he suddenly appearing before him. 'I am your uncle, Gobindalal Roy.'

Sachikanta was struck dumb with astonishment. For a while he looked at tentively at his uncle and knew him. Overjoyed to find he was alive he fell on his knees before him and kissed the dust of his feet. Gobindalal laid his hand on his head and blessed him. The young man insisted on his going home with him, but he refused. 'I came just to see my native village after these many years. I must be off now,' said he.

'We should be so happy if you would stay, sir, and look after your estate,' said Sachikanta.

No, my boy I can no more have any pleasure in anything of this world. I am happy in the life I am leading. After such fearful storms as I have seen in my life I have come to a haven than which a better and safer one can never be. God is my haven. My life as long as it is spared I will devote to His service. He helping me Farewell my boy. May God prosper you.

When he had said that he left him and walked away with hurried steps and was quickly gone. After this he was never more seen in Haridigram nor ever heard of again.

Translated by

D. C. ROY

THE END